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FRANK LAWRENCE

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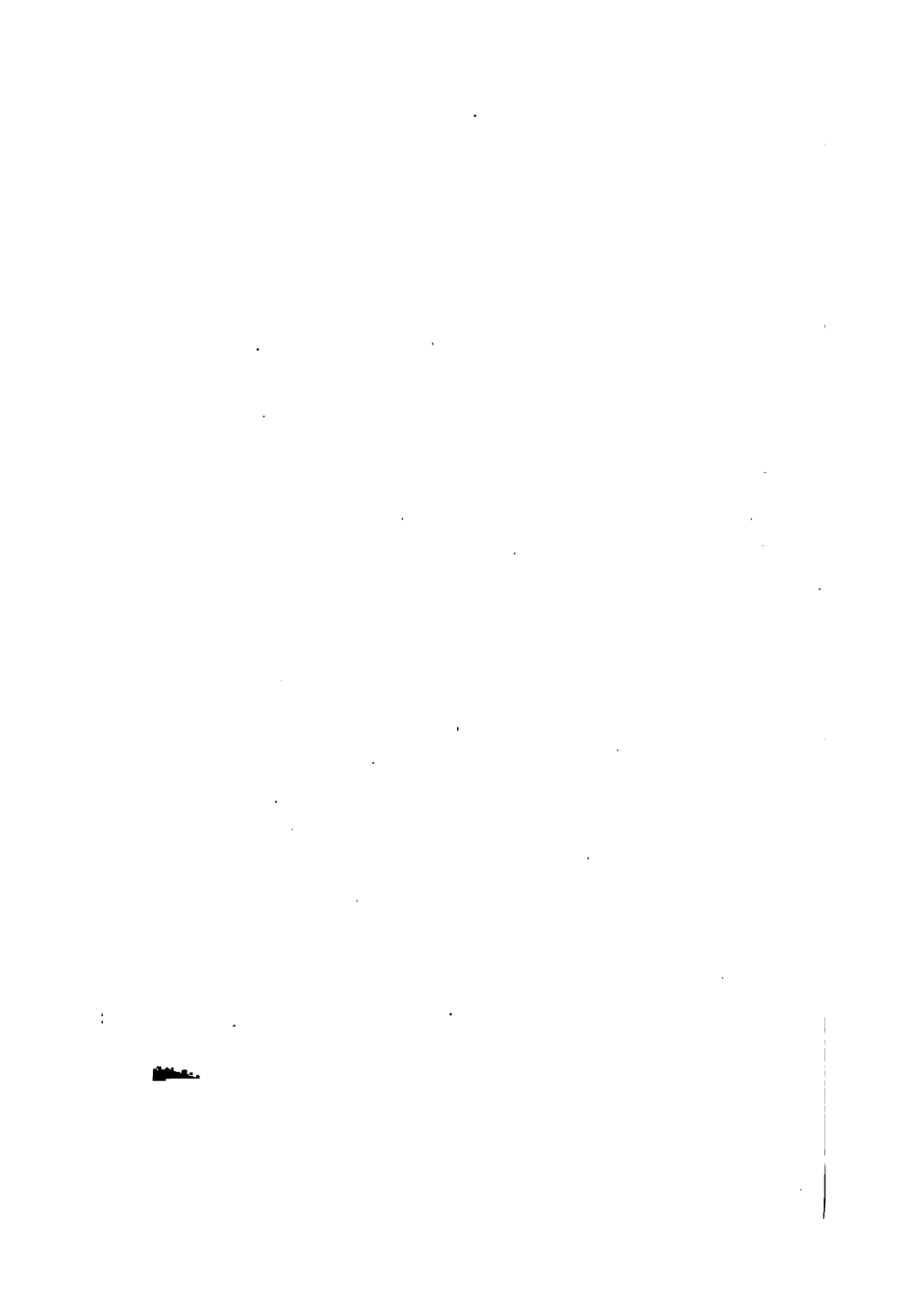
A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY



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# FRANK LAWRENCE;

OR,

A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY.

BY

THE REV. H. C. ADAMS, M.A.

"In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love."

TENNYSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY & SON,  
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1873.

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# FRANK LAWRENCE.

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## CHAPTER I.

It was a pleasant evening in June. Three young men were lounging in the garden of a small roadside inn, in a village which we will call Thorleigh. Their gay jerseys and College boating caps, together with the light two-oared wherry moored to some palings, through which glimpses of the river were perceived, as it wound its silvery way—showed that they were visitors from the University, lying at a few miles distance. The fragments of a rural repast, and a half empty basket of strawberries in an arbour close at hand, told as plainly the attraction of the visit. They had been very merry, doubtless, in the earlier part of the afternoon; but, at present, their



enjoyment seemed to be too complete in itself to allow even of merriment. One of the group was stretched at full-length on the turf of the bowling-green, regardless of the fast-rising dews. The other two, more prudent, had selected, one the bench of the small summer-house, the other a rude easy-chair for his resting place.

Half an hour might have passed without a word being interchanged, and the sun had long disappeared behind the screen of trees terminating the prospect, when the lounge on the bench slowly roused himself, and as leisurely proceeded to consult his watch. The result appeared to surprise him.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed, "there must be some mistake to be sure; and yet no, there can't be either. I say Lawrence, Nevinson, have you any idea of how the time is going?"

"Very pleasantly, I think, for once in a way," rejoined the first-named of his companions, a handsome and distinguished-looking young man, with a bright smile, and intelligent features. "The dinner was tolerable, the strawberries and cream good, and the

evening is delicious. What need to inquire after time, when he is behaving himself so unusually well?"

"A good deal of need," rejoined the first speaker, "that is, unless you have a mind to get the *Æneid* to 'transcribe,' as that old fogey, Graydon, would express it, or be confined to College for the rest of the term. The light will be failing in another hour or so; and this part of the river is no place to navigate in the dark, as we have had pretty good proof of on our way here."

"Pooh!" said Lawrence, lazily lifting himself in a sitting posture. "It is never quite dark at this time of the year throughout the whole night. Besides the moon will be up in another half hour, and then the river will be as light as day; we need not be in at St. Jude's before twelve o'clock. Let us stop another hour, at least." As he spoke, he subsided leisurely into his former attitude, singing to himself,

" 'Twas a beautiful night,  
The stars shone bright,  
And the moon on the waters played."

Come leave us in peace, Jack Walsh. What

is life made for, but enjoyment; and 'what is more enjoyable than a row by moonlight? Have you no imagination, Jack—no fancy?"

"No fancy to catch rheumatism, or have the bottom of the boat stove in by a stump, or get five hundred lines of Virgil to write out," retorted Walsh, "and one, if not all three, will be the certain consequence of our staying here much longer. Here, Nevinson, you have more gumption than this fellow, anyhow. Ought we not to be going?"

During this conversation, the third of the party, a man of a tall powerful build, and a good, rather than a handsome, cast of countenance, had been examining the sky in the quarter not visible to his companions.

"Walsh is right, Frank," he said, "we had better be off at once. The moon is very well. But remember this is not Derwent-water; but a river with high banks, mostly lined with trees, and a narrow channel filled with what the Yankees call 'snags' and 'sawyers,' in a small way, no doubt, but awkward customers, nevertheless. Moreover, there is an ugly bank of clouds, threa-

tening rain in an hour or two at furthest. We had best pay our chalk, and be off."

"Well, what must be, must, I suppose," returned Lawrence, rising once more with a yawn. "What ho! 'mine host, bully host, the reckoning!' See you not, that we must 'shog, trot,' as Falstaff has it? The reckoning, I say, bully host," he continued, as the landlord made with the bill in his hand. "Let us peruse it. Item, two chickens 5s.; item, two gallons of ale, 2s. 8d.; six pottles of strawberries, 3s.; item, bread. Why, it is Fat Jack's reckoning over again, I protest!"

"Nonsense, Frank," interposed Nevinson, taking the bill out of his hand, and cutting short, by prompt payment, the indignation of the landlord; who, albeit not unused to the chaff of his Oxford visitors, was about to make warm protest against the Shakespearean epithet of "bully," which he interpreted according to its nineteenth century meaning—"Nonsense! We really have no time to lose. The oars are in the boat, and the rudder is shipped. Let us be off at once." So saying, he took his companion by

the arm, and began drawing him towards the waterside.

“William Nevinson, you old muff,” growled Lawrence, as he yielded to the pressure, “you have even less imagination than Jack Walsh. Neither moonlight nor Shakespeare have any charms for you. I tell you, you are unworthy to dwell by the banks of Derwentwater. Your proper sphere is a high stool in a counting-house in Leadenhall Street. And what now,” he pursued, as Walsh seated himself in the steersman’s place, “surely you are not so far deluded as to believe that I, Francis Lawrence, am going to row? Would you put Pegasus into harness?”

“It is Pegasus’s turn,” replied Walsh coolly, drawing forth a cigar as he spoke. “You steered all the way up, you know, and we rowed. Therefore—”

“Therefore the same arrangement had better continue,” interrupted Lawrence. “It is always best to leave well alone. We prospered when you rowed and I steered. But who knows what would have been the result, if the division of labour had been different. The famous argument of Aristotle—”

"Aristotle be hanged!" exclaimed Walsh, angrily. "I do believe, Frank, you are the laziest fellow living. Miss Edgworth might well call one of her stories, which I used to read when I was a small boy, 'Lazy Lawrence.'"

"You had better let him have his way," said Nevinson, interposing. "If we do make him row, he will do it so lazily, that we shall make no way. We should lose more than we should gain."

Walsh slowly vacated the steersman's place. "Are you sure you know all the bends of the river?" he asked doubtfully. "This is the first time, I expect, that you have been up this way. And there are one or two puzzling turns."

"Don't be afraid, John Walsh," was the ready answer.

"'I know each turn, and every winding green,  
Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild stream,  
And every bosky bank from side to side.'

Don't be afraid. I was not born on a Saturday night, Jack. 'Spect my birthday was earlier in the week than that. Did I not steer

you safely all the way here, with but one or two trifling mistakes, 'which,' as Graydon says, 'only show the general excellence of the design.' There, that is right," he added, as the boat was pushed off, and began to move down stream, "now we are off,

'Row, row, homeward we go.'

Now this is what I call delicious—too delicious to allow of talking. He lounged back on his seat, keeping his eyes only just wide enough open to allow him to steer, and relapsed into silence.

His companions seemed equally indisposed for conversation. They continued to row steadily for nearly an hour, Lawrence occasionally bursting forth into a fragment of a song, or a quotation from a favourite poet, or some remark commendatory of his skill in steering. The darkness came on more rapidly than they had expected; and the clouds gradually overspreading the sky, seemed likely to verify Walsh's prediction. It became evident before long that a storm was threatening; and the only question was whether they would be able to reach Oxford in

time to escape a wet jacket. Insensibly they quickened their stroke; and even Lawrence so far roused himself, as to sit upright in his place, and look carefully round him. At length they were suddenly brought to a stand still, by Walsh's oar catching in a mass of weeds, with a shock that nearly sent him backwards into the bottom of the boat.

"A crab, I do protest!" exclaimed Lawrence. "Oh, Jack Walsh! has it come to this? An old Westminster, and a crack oar in your College boat as you boast yourself to be—for you to be cutting crabs like a freshman in his first term!"

"Stow that!" exclaimed Walsh a little angrily, for the blow in the chest had been a severe one, "who is to help cutting crabs, I should like to know, in a lump of weeds like that? I wish you would look out where you are steering to. Back a little, Nevinson, we are right in the middle of a bank of them. And, by Jove! I don't recollect this place at all. Do you remember passing that weir yonder, as we came up this morning?"

"No," replied Nevinson, "I am pretty sure we did not pass it. I have been fancy-



ing for the last quarter of an hour, that we were going wrong. But the light is getting so bad, that it is difficult to make certain. Are you sure, Frank, that you have not made a wrong turn?"

Thus adjured, Lawrence was obliged to admit that he had not, until within the last few minutes, been keeping a very bright look out upon anything; and such attention as he had bestowed, had been given chiefly to the moon, or rather the clouds, which had now completely obscured it. Nor could he deny that it was highly probable that he had gone on the wrong side of what appeared to be an island, a long way back. He comforted them, however, with the assurance that it would infallibly rain within a few minutes, and, therefore, they would have been equally certain of getting wet, in any case, before they could reach Oxford; secondly, that it was their *kismet*, destiny, as the Turks said, and they must needs submit to it; and, thirdly, that he was now quite willing to take his place at the oar, and relieve either of them.

"Thank you for nothing," replied Walsh

to this friendly assurance ; " but neither was my birthday on a Saturday evening. Catch me sitting still in the rain, after I have got heated with pulling, while you keep your blood warm with the work. No, Mr. Pegasus, guess you have made your bed, and must lie upon it."

" As you like," returned the other, relapsing into his former attitude, " only I warn you that I saw several sharp stumps only just below the surface of the water, as I came up. I contrived to avoid them then ; but I won't answer for it, that considering the present imperfect light, and my unfortunate drowsy state, I shall be equally successful in escaping them again. But never mind. Anything for a quiet life, as the tortoise said when they picked his brains out. Let us move on, as we are."

Nevinson again interposed, and a brief consultation was held. As it appeared on inquiry that Lawrence really did know nothing of the river, the banks, or the art of steering itself, except what he might possess by the light of nature—it was agreed that Walsh should take his place, at all events until

they had escaped from their present difficulty. The change was soon made; and Lawrence, taking Walsh's oar, they started at a rapid pace, stimulated by a few drops of rain which began now to fall. Even Lawrence exerted himself to the best of his ability, and the boat made rapid way through the water. But the new arrangements, however judicious, were not destined to advantage them much. They had scarcely gone two hundred yards, when the bow of the boat came into contact with the stump of a pole, which had once formed the support of a handbridge. The blow stove a large hole in the bottom of the boat, which began instantly to fill. Nevinson and Lawrence had just time to run to the bow and spring ashore, leaving Walsh to struggle out as well as he was able, by the help of his companions' hands, but as completely soaked through as Achilles himself, after his immersion in the Styx.

"Whew!" exclaimed Lawrence, "here's a go! What is to come next, I wonder. I guess that boat is pretty well done for; and to add to our other comforts, here comes the rain at last—a good, downright, honest, pour.

Jack, my dear fellow, do not rattle your teeth so awfully, I beseech you; after all, you are better off than we are. We can get wet through, but you cannot."

An angry scowl came over Walsh's face, which was not pleasant to look at. He was evidently boiling with anger, which for some reason he was anxious to suppress, but could only half succeed in doing so. "Hold your tongue," he growled, in answer to Frank's *jeu d'esprit*. "Hold your tongue, will you? If it had not been for your stupid carelessness, we should have been almost at Oxford by this time. Do either of you know whereabouts we are? Confound it, Lawrence," he added, more sharply, seeing that his companion was still half disposed to indulge his mirth; "I won't have this, I tell you. It is past a joke!"

The tone in which he spoke, showed that he was really vexed: "So it is, Jack," replied Lawrence, "I beg pardon, but I didn't mean to rile you. I haven't the least idea where we are. The best thing, I think, will be for us to find our way to the nearest cottage, and two of us stay there while the third

goes to fetch a fly from the nearest inn. I'll do penance for my misbehaviour and be the one to go after the fly, if you like ; the question, however, is, where *is* the nearest cottage?"

" If I don't mistake, we passed one, twenty yards or so from the bank, not many minutes ago," said Nevinson, "we had better look out for it. I think your suggestion very good."

Walsh also approving the proposal, they proceeded to act on it. By the help of the boat-hook, they drew to shore, first the oars and stretcher ; afterwards the boat itself, which though sunk beneath the surface, had not gone any deeper, and hauled it, high and dry, on the bank. They then set off in the direction indicated by Nevinson, and after a quarter of an hour's search, discovered the cottage. On approaching it more nearly, they found that the main road, leading evidently to the village where they had dined, lay almost close to it. Lawrence's suggestion was now carried out in all respects ; excepting that Walsh, who was soaked through with his ducking, and was afraid of sitting still in

his wet clothes, requested that he might be the one to go in search of the conveyance. This being agreed to, he took note of the bearing of the cottage, and committed his upper coat to the charge of Lawrence: after which he started off at a round trot on his expedition.

Friendly relations had, to all appearance, been re-established between himself and Lawrence; but the half-muttered soliloquy to which he gave vent, as he splashed through the wet mud of the Thorleigh road, did not sound very amicable.

"I should like to pitch it into Master Lawrence," he growled, garnishing his speech with a choice selection of oaths; "I should like to pitch it into him, till he hadn't a whole bone in his body! and I'd do it too, if he wasn't stronger than me in the first place, and too useful in the second, for me to quarrel with. He thinks to cut his jokes on me, because he is General Lawrence's heir; and I am not going to break with him as things stand now. But a time may come when I shall have the chance of paying him out, and I shan't be slow to do it either. Plague take

this beastly mud and wet! Where can this village be?"

Francis Lawrence, the subject of this outburst, would not have been so much angered, as surprised at it, if he could have heard it. To do him justice, though he was fond of his joke, and sometimes inclined to forget that it might be unpleasing to those at whose expense it was made, he was incapable of the ill-nature imputed to him by his companion, and still less of presuming on his higher birth and station. He had no idea but that the regret he had expressed, had entirely removed Walsh's annoyance. It was without the slightest suspicion of the frame of mind in which the latter was wending his way along the miry high road, that he followed Nevinson through the gate of the cottage garden, and knocked at the door for admission.

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## CHAPTER II.

SEVERAL minutes passed without any notice having been taken of their knock ; and Lawrence, growing impatient, was on the point of repeating it, when his hand upraised for that purpose, was suddenly arrested. From the interior of the cottage a few notes were heard, which Lawrence, who was a good musician, at once recognised as those of a guitar ; and a female voice began singing a wild Spanish air to its accompaniment. The words were plainly a translation from the same language.

“ A Moor rode forth from the Paynim host,  
His lance in the air he gaily tossed.  
‘ Is there ever a knight, for the Christian creed,  
Will hazard a cast of the light jereed ?’



" From the ranks of the Christian no answer came.  
On each dark cheek was the flush of shame.  
For the deadly lance of the Moor Almayne  
Was red to the haft with the blood of Spain.  
Oh woe, oh woe, for Spain !

" A youth rode forth, to the host unknown,  
On a milk white steed, with his visor down.  
' If it pleaseth the King, I will straightway go,  
And fight to the death with yon braggart foe !'  
" No word in reply King Pelayo said,  
In wondering awe as he bent his head.  
And the cymbals clashed, and the trumpets pealed,  
As the champions met in the central field.  
Oh strike, oh strike for Spain !

" It seemed through the air that a whirlwind passed—  
'Twas the rush of the spear by the Moslem cast.  
But the milk white steed, with a bound aside  
Sprang like a bird, and the dart went wide.

" Then the lance of the Spaniard in answer flew—  
Buckler and corslet and bosom through.  
And a shout rose high as the Moor fell dead,  
And the Christians charged, and the Pagans fled.  
Hurrah, hurrah for Spain !

" They sought for the hero of that proud day,  
To wreath round his temples the victor's bay,  
In the ranks that upraised the triumphal stave,  
On the field strewn thick with the fallen brave.

" But none in the host could declare his name,  
Or whither he went, or from whence he came.  
Nor ever before, nor ever again  
Was that warrior seen in the ranks of Spain.  
Oh St. James, St. James for Spain !"

The voice of the singer was rich and sweet, the intonation full of pathos, and the execution simple and masterly. Even in a brilliant concert room, such an exhibition would have called forth a burst of applause: here the contrast of time, place, and circumstance gave it overpowering effect. Lawrence stood still in an ecstasy of surprise and delight, as though he were afraid of dissolving, by the slightest motion, what seemed to be a delicious dream. When at the completion of the air the songstress' voice sunk into silence, he still retained his attitude, listening eagerly in the hope of her beginning anew.

There is no saying how long he might not have continued thus, if it had not been for his companion, William Nevinson; whose admiration of music, whether great or little, did not at all events extend so far as to render him insensible to the discomforts of the damp ground and drizzling atmosphere in which he was standing. Finding that Lawrence made no second effort to attract attention, he uplifted the boat-hook, which he had retained, and raised such a din against

the cottage door, that no human ears, unless stone deaf, could have remained insensible to it. The guitarist within, who had just commenced the prelude to another song, suddenly stopped. There was a slight stir in the house, a noise of feet ascending the stairs, and then the window over their heads was thrown open, and a shrill female voice was heard inquiring who they were and what they wanted.

"Dry clothes and shelter, my good woman," answered Nevinson. "We have had an accident on the river. Our boat has sunk, and we do not know our way back to Oxford. One of our party has gone to Thorleigh to get a conveyance; and we want you to let us stay in your house, and dry our clothes, until he comes to take us up. We will willingly pay any reasonable charge you may make."

"We don't let travellers lodgings," replied the woman, who appeared to be either very deaf or very inattentive to Nevinson's speech; "we don't let travellers lodgings, and have nothing to give to tramps. You'll find a house, where you may be suited, about

two miles farther on, on the left hand side of the road."

"Thank you kindly, my worthy old lady," said Lawrence, whose desire to enter the house was much enhanced by curiosity to see the songstress, whose performance had so charmed him, "but we do not aspire to the dignity of a tramp's lodging-house. We only want shelter from the rain for half-an-hour, or perhaps an hour, while our friend fetches a fly to take us all back to Oxford. We shall be obliged to wait outside your house in the rain, if you do not give us admittance."

The old woman was about to repeat her refusal, when another voice was heard pitched in a lower key, and, as it seemed to them, remonstrating or giving some explanation. Presently the first speaker replied, "Well, child, if you are sure they are respectable, I don't mind. I don't much like people who come at this hour of the night, when decent folk ought to be in their beds; but I'll go down, and open the door."

The footsteps were now again heard descending the staircase, and presently the door being thrown open, the two young men were ad-


mitted into a tolerably large kitchen, furnished plainly, but in a more comfortable style than was usual in such cottages. The floor was boarded, and in part carpeted. In the recess of a deep projecting window was placed a mahogany table, covered with a crimson cloth. On this there stood several articles, among which Lawrence's quick eye noticed a flower-vase filled with roses, a buhl inkstand, and a rosewood work-box. There were also some prettily bound volumes, which proved on examination to consist of popular modern poetry, together with editions in Spanish of the *Cid* and *Don Quixote*. A portfolio stood on a bracket close by, containing drawings, such as are rarely found under a roof like that which now sheltered them. They were chiefly water-colour landscapes, and fruit pieces, displaying considerable taste, if not high artistic skill. One of them, a seapiece representing a wild rocky coast, with fishermen's cottages dotted here and there among the cliffs, was still unfinished. Lawrence at once identified these unusual decorations of a cottage table with the incognita, whose music he had listened to a few minutes before with

so much delight. This opinion was confirmed by the discovery of the end of a guitar, protruding from a recess in the wall ; into which it had doubtless been thrust by its owner, when Nevinson's knock startled her. There was an indefinite air of refinement, contrasting with the roughness of the ordinary peasant's life, which struck him with a strange piquancy.

Meanwhile, Nevinson was engaged in explaining to the old woman, whom he now found perfectly able to understand him—her apprehension of robbery and murder having subsided—the circumstances, which had obliged them to seek shelter at so unusual an hour. His statement, and still more his personal appearance, and that of Lawrence, (whose position in life, notwithstanding their rough boating dresses, could not be mistaken) entirely dispelled any lingering suspicions which might have still disturbed her. She stirred the smouldering fire into a blaze, heaped on more wood and coal, and then placing chairs on either side of the fender, requested them to seat themselves and dry their clothes. Lawrence, as he accepted the

offer, eyed her furtively with much curiosity. She seemed to be about seventy years old, was decently dressed, and her whole appearance was respectable. But there was nothing to support the notion that she had ever belonged to any higher position in society.

It was impossible, so Lawrence reasoned, that the owner of the guitar could stand in any degree of relationship to her. This conclusion only stimulated further conjectures. Perhaps the house was larger than it had appeared to Nevinson and himself by the uncertain light. Perhaps the unknown might be a lodger, passing with her father, or her newly wedded husband, a few weeks of summer in these sylvan solitudes. Perhaps she was a professional artist making up her book of sketches in preparation for the London exhibitions of the ensuing season. Perhaps she was a governess engaged in teaching in some family of the neighbourhood; and they, unable to find a room for her in their own house, had provided a lodging in the cottage of one of their dependents. Perhaps, for Lawrence's imagination was of a lively order, perhaps she was a



heroine of romance, who had fled from her home to avoid some odious suitor, whom her tyrannical guardian persisted in thrusting on her; and the old woman, a faithful servitor of former years, who was prepared at every hazard to give shelter to her persecuted mistress. Whichever of these theories might be correct, Lawrence was resolved, if possible, to get to the bottom of the mystery, and he took his measures without loss of time.

Approaching the table, he took up one of the landscapes, and began to examine it by the light of a candle. Finding that this did not call forth any remark from the hostess, he proceeded to descant on its merits to Nevinson, in a tone which he took care to make sufficiently audible upstairs. This manœuvre likewise failing of success, he adopted another, and addressing himself to the old woman, inquired whether the drawings were the work of a professional artist; and if so, what was their price.

"They are painted by a young woman," she replied in a constrained tone, "and she sells them for what they fetch to a picture dealer in Oxford."



"Ha, indeed!" remarked Lawrence, "they are admirably executed. I should like to purchase some of them, if I might; but I do not see any price marked on them. Perhaps if I could see the artist"—

"If you will say which you want to buy," said the woman, "I will find out what the price is, if so be they are not already sold."

Lawrence bit his lip. His curiosity was only the more strongly stimulated by his discomfiture. He again changed his tactics. Once more approaching the table he took the guitar from the recess, appearing to notice it for the first time. "Ha! a guitar," he said, and as he spoke, he ran his fingers lightly over the strings, "a beautiful instrument, and in my opinion the best suited of any to accompany the human voice. Come, Nevins, give us a song, and I will accompany you."

"Thank you, Frank, I am not musical, as you know; and even if I were, I doubt whether our present audience are musically disposed."

There was a slight accent on the words,

either of warning or reproof—so at least Lawrence fancied, which jarred on his ear.

“What makes you think that?” he replied quickly, “on the contrary, I should say they must be fond of music. Witness the guitar here, and the song we heard while we were waiting outside. At all events, I can but try.”

He struck a few preliminary chords, and then began the beautiful Irish air of “Kathleen Mavourneen.” It has already been remarked that he was an accomplished musician, and the song he had chosen was generally thought to be his *chef d'œuvre*, suiting as it did the compass of his high tenor voice, and giving full scope for the expression, which was the chief merit of his singing. On the present occasion he exerted his powers to the utmost. Nevinson thought he had never heard him sing so well. Even the grim hostess relaxed her taciturnity so far, as to mutter a few words at the conclusion, which sounded like an expression of approval.

“Ah, you like Irish songs,” said Lawrence, catching at the opening, “there is another air quite as beautiful, which is intended as a com-

panion to 'Kathleen Mavourneen,' only it ought to be sung by a soprano voice. Could you not persuade the lady to whom the guitar belongs, and whom I fear we have driven away by our intrusion—could you not persuade her to sing it? From what I heard of her voice while we were standing outside, I am satisfied that it would suit her admirably."

"My niece never sings before strangers," was the answer, in a tone more ungracious than the speaker had yet adopted; and Lawrence who had now exhausted all his resources, was compelled to abandon his design. He lounged back in his chair, and remained silent during the remainder of his stay in the cottage. Inwardly, however, he consoled himself in some degree for his failure, by recalling the decisive words "my niece," uttered by the hostess, in her last reply to him. "Her niece, hey?" he thought, "well, perhaps it is as well that I have not seen her. She has a fine voice, and, it would seem, some artistic taste; but the niece of that highly respectable specimen of womanhood! *Corpo di Bacco!* the thought is

enough to make one's blood run cold ! It cannot be but that she has a thick waist, a huge foot, and probably sandy hair, and the family nose ! Well, since I am not to have a sight of her, the sooner we are out of this the better. I wonder what can have become of Jack ? He has been gone nearly an hour by that clock, and I protest I never saw hands move so slowly as they seem to do !”

At length the welcome rumble of wheels was heard in the distance ; and a few minutes afterwards the voice of Walsh was heard hailing them from the road. Rejoiced to be released from the *ennui* of their present situation, both the Oxonians started up, and after rendering their thanks to the hostess for the hospitality she had shown them, took their departure. They found Walsh waiting for them in an old ramshackle post-chaise, which had been condemned as useless a dozen years ago, but which was the only vehicle that the village inn could furnish. Jack, who had procured a change of clothes from the landlord, and had fortified himself by a cigar, and one or two stiff glasses of brandy and water, against the risk of catching cold,

apology for his intrusion, when he paused in his speech, fairly dazzled by the vision of loveliness he saw before him. Her figure was perhaps a little above the middle height, but had that exquisite symmetry which makes it difficult to determine the real stature. Her hair, of the deepest and glossiest black, was woven into rich braids over cheeks, to whose pale olive complexion youth and health, and possibly excitement, had lent a tinge of pink. Her long dark eyelashes shaded eyes, that by a rare, but charming caprice of nature, were not of the colour which usually distinguishes dark-haired beauties, but of a deep cloudless blue. Her dress, though of the plainest, it might almost be said, of the coarsest materials, was, nevertheless, elegantly shaped, and worn gracefully and becomingly. Lawrence, as he glanced at the lovely form and features, was instantly assured that it was no peasant girl, but his equal at the least, a lady born and bred, that stood before him. As soon as he had recovered from the first shock of his surprise, he proceeded to address her accordingly.

"I have a thousand pardons to ask for

my unmannerly entrance," he said. "I discovered that I had left my friend's coat behind me in the cottage, and they were impatient for my return. I did not expect to find you, that is, any one, in the room."

The lady bowed without replying; and perceiving that her visitor did not retire immediately, as she had expected, glanced towards the door. Lawrence would not see it. Taking up one of the drawings, which still lay on the table, he said—

"I fear I am taking a great liberty, but may I venture to inquire whether these are yours, and if so, whether they are fancy pieces, or from nature? The latter, I imagined, when I was examining them just now. They seem to possess so much homelike truth. But in saying that, perhaps I am unconsciously paying tribute to your powers of composition."

"Some of them are original, and some are copies," said the unknown, speaking for the first time, and in a tone of decided constraint. "But pray do not let me detain you longer from your friends, who seem impatient of your absence."

Inwardly anathematizing Jack Walsh, whose stentorian voice was audible in the distance, shouting to him to make haste, Lawrence moved to the door.

"At least, you will suffer me to ask," he said, with his hand on the lock, "whether I rightly understand from your—from our late hostess—that these drawings are—"

"The set you are examining have been already disposed of to Mr. Wrightsen of the High-street," she replied, and then added still more curtly, "and I only receive commissions through him."

Notwithstanding her evident impatience of his presence, Lawrence would still have lingered. But at this moment, the sound of Walsh's voice close to the house, in tones of loud indignation, warned him that it was high time to retreat, if he did not mean to have his *tête-à-tête* broken in upon. With a bow of profound respect, therefore, which was slightly returned, he quitted the cottage.

"Just in time to prevent Walsh from seeing her," he thought. "Well, that is quite as well. Jack is a coarse fellow sometimes with women; and might have been rude

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even to her ; and then I should have had to kick him. What a glorious creature ! I must see her again. That's poz."

The thread of his reflections was cut short at this point by his reaching the carriage door. Pacifying his companions as well as he could, he re-entered the chaise, and was driven back to Oxford.



### CHAPTER III.

ABOUT a week after the adventure detailed in the previous chapter, Lawrence set out one afternoon for a solitary ride. He had rejected on one plea or another several offers of companionship, his mind being in that restless state which makes all society irksome. He could not shake off the impression which the sight of the unknown fair one had made upon him, or overcome the eager desire he felt of renewing his acquaintance with her. But he had been completely baffled in the attempts he had made to bring about that result. On the day following the boating expedition he had lounged into Wrightsen's shop; and carefully examining the water-colour drawings which

the well-filled shelves presented, had had little difficulty in discovering those of which he was in search. He then called the picture-dealer to him, and began to express his admiration of their uncommon excellence.

“I suppose you know who the artist is, Wrightsen?” he said. “Do you think he would undertake to produce a series of illustrations of Sir Walter Scott’s *Bridal of Triermain*, introducing the Lake of Derwentwater, and its environs? The painter of these specimens appears to be particularly successful in rock and water scenery ; which would be the chief features in the series required.” Mr. Wrightsen had replied rather pompously that he knew the artist quite well. It was a person, to whom he had been in the habit for some months past of giving occasional employment, and who no doubt would be happy to execute Mr. Lawrence’s orders. If he would give him a complete description of the number, size, and general design of what he wanted, he would communicate with the artist, and inform him of the reply.

To this Lawrence had rejoined, that he would rather see the artist himself, and con-

sult with him what scenes he thought he would be able to execute with the most success. He would rather not trust his own judgment on the subject. Frank noticed that the tradesman's face grew rather blank, as he heard this suggestion; and he had that morning called at his rooms to inform him—which he did with a slight smile—that the painter of the sketches he had admired, was unfortunately prevented by a press of business from undertaking his commission. Lawrence felt at once attracted and repelled by this determined rejection of his acquaintance. He was more eager than ever to carry the point on which he had set his fancy, but what more could he now do? His instinct as a gentleman forbade him to intrude himself into the lady's presence in the teeth of her express prohibition. Nay, even if he had not felt thus, he was aware that no course would be so certain as that, to ensure his final exclusion. The only path which had seemed likely to lead to the accomplishment of his wish had now been closed up.

“But after all,” he reflected, as his favourite mare, Black Bess, cantered easily along the

turf which skirted Thorleigh Wood, "after all perhaps it is as well that she has kept me at a distance. It would have been very jolly, no doubt, to get acquainted with her. By Jove, there is nothing I wouldn't have done to get sight of those eyes of hers again. But I shouldn't have been satisfied, I guess, with seeing them once or twice either, and who knows what would have been the upshot of it?"

This question had already suggested itself to Frank at the very outset of his proceedings, but had been summarily dismissed with the insidious answer that it would be time enough to think of that when the acquaintance had been made. Now, however, it rather comforted him to dwell upon it. "What *would* have been the consequence?" Well, he supposed courtship, and after that marriage—two very charming things, no doubt, where the lady was a paragon of loveliness. But Frank knew that although such a marriage would do very well as a vision of romance, it was out of the question as a sober reality.

In the first place there was Frank's grand-

father, General Lawrence, of Derwent Court, his only near relative. The General was not a mere worshipper of rank or wealth ; but few men had more regard for the claims of birth and station than he had. To persuade him that an unknown artist, without rank, money, or connection, was a suitable match for his heir, would be a hopeless task indeed. "No," he exclaimed, after a quarter of an hour's meditation, during which Black Bess insensibly subsided from a canter to a foot's pace, "the General would never consent, that is quite certain. He would cut me off—possibly *with* a shilling, but certainly *without* mercy, if he thought I was up to anything of the kind. Come, old girl"—he touched the mare's shoulder with his whip lightly, as he spoke—"that is settled, and now let us have another canter in the other direction and keep out of mischief."

It was a wise resolve ; but, unfortunately, like many others of our hero's forming, destined to have but a brief existence. He had scarcely put the mare in motion, when his attention was attracted by a loud cry for help, which proceeded from some spot in the

wood, apparently not a hundred yards distant, but which the foliage concealed from sight. Following the direction of the voice, Lawrence threaded his way through the boles of the trees, until he found himself on the banks of a small stream, swollen by recent rains, and rushing with the rapidity of a miniature torrent. A single glance explained the cause of the screams which he had heard. On the further side of the water, at a distance of perhaps fifty yards, a child of four years old was clinging to a tuft of weeds, with the convulsive strength of mortal terror, to save itself from being carried over a fall of at least ten or twelve feet, which lay between the child and the spot which Lawrence had now reached. On the nearer bank a female figure was leaning over the stream. One of her arms was clasped round the stem of an elder tree, with the other she was trying to throw the end of a long shawl within the child's reach, uttering at the same time the cries for help which Lawrence had heard. The latter drew his rein, and paused for a moment in doubt how best to render assistance. The current was too deep to allow of its

being forded, nor could the strongest swimmer have made head against it. In the background, at a considerable distance, appeared the hand-rail of a rustic bridge ; but he could see clearly that the child's strength would not hold out long enough, to allow of his crossing the brook that way to its rescue. He cast a glance at the banks of the stream. They were steep and dangerous, and the width across was enough to have tried the nerves of the boldest rider that ever crossed a saddle. Nevertheless, it appeared to be the only chance. Turning the mare back for a few yards, Lawrence touched her flank sharply with the spur, and rode her full at the leap. The spirited animal, catching sight of the gulf before her, sprang with a bound like that of a deer from the bank, and succeeded in reaching the opposite side, falling, however, forward on her chest as she did so. Lawrence was shot forward on the turf ; but fortunately the spot where he alighted was soft and mossy, and in an instant he was on his feet again unhurt.

Leaving Black Bess to extricate herself from her difficulties as well as she could, he

ran without a moment's pause to the water-side, just in time to seize the child's frock, as its grasp on the weeds gave way. With some difficulty he carried the inanimate body up the bank, and began to try to recover the little fellow from the swoon into which he had fallen. Meanwhile the woman, who had been unconscious of his presence until the rush of the mare's leap attracted her attention, hastened round by the hand-bridge at once to thank and to assist her unexpected ally. Lawrence raised his head as she approached, and with a start of mingled surprise and delight recognised the fair heroine of his previous adventure. It was evident that the recognition was mutual; for the first sight of his face was followed by a blush so deep, as to suffuse not only her cheek, but her forehead and neck also with the deepest crimson. It was, however, no time for ceremony or explanation.

"The child has fainted," said Lawrence. "He cannot have suffered any injury except from fright, but he seems delicate and weakly—ought not his wet clothes to be changed immediately."



"Yes, he must be put to bed as soon as possible; but, unfortunately, there is no house near at hand. Our cottage is nearly a mile off; but that, I believe, is the nearest. I am afraid I shall be unable to carry him so far."

"Do not think of doing so," said Lawrence, "I can carry him without the least difficulty, if you will show me the way."

"You are most kind, but will you be able? There is your horse; I hope it is not hurt."

"Not the least," returned Frank. "You need not mind her; see, she has already got up and has begun grazing. I will fasten her to a tree until I return; or, perhaps, if you do not mind, you will lead her by the bridle, and then I shall be able to ride for the doctor if he is wanted, as soon as we reach your house. There," he continued, stepping up to Black Bess, and catching the rein which was dangling over her shoulder, "she will follow you, you will find, as quietly as a dog."

He raised the child again in his arms; and his companion, complying without further remonstrance, proceeded to show the way through the wood, with as rapid a step as she

could command. Frank's heart beat high as he paced by her side. All the prudent resolves he had formed not a quarter of an hour before, had vanished to the winds. He could think of nothing but the beautiful being beside him, and the welcome chance, which had gained him the long desired introduction. The two walked on in embarrassed silence for nearly a mile. At length the lady spoke.

"Yonder stands our cottage," she said, "you can see the gable over the tops of the shrubs, and between the boles of those two elms"

"I remember it quite well," replied Lawrence significantly. Then noticing the colour which once more overspread her cheek, he added quickly, "Had you lost the little boy just now, or how did the accident happen?"

"I was sketching in the wood," she replied, "and Freddy, I suppose, poor little fellow, came to look for me, as he used to do earlier in the spring. But he had given up the practice for the last month, and I had forgotten all about him. There are some stepping stones by which he had been accustomed to cross; and he did not know, I conclude,

that the brook had been swelled to a torrent by the late rains. It was his cry for help that gave me the first notice that he was anywhere near. But my help would have availed him little. I do not know how we can ever be grateful enough to you for your noble self-devotion—risking your own life in that fearful manner! I did not think there was a man alive,” she continued, her lip quivering, and her cheek blanching at the recollection, “who would have ventured on that fearful leap!”

“Do not speak of it, pray,” returned Lawrence. “Whatever praise may be due belongs to Black Bess, rather than to me; and I have often risked my neck quite as much, merely for my own amusement. But we have arrived. Let me carry my little protégé upstairs, and then, can I be of any service in fetching a doctor? I suppose there is one who lives somewhere nearer than Oxford?”

The inquiry was cut short by the appearance of the old woman, whose name, it should be mentioned, Lawrence afterwards ascertained to be Newness (so at least her

neighbours pronounced it.) She was, it appeared, a native of the village; but had been absent from it for so many years, that on her return with her niece and nephew, about three months before, but few of the older residents survived to remember her. She bore the character of a decent respectable woman, but somewhat querulous, and occasionally given to venting her displeasure in a fit of scolding. The sight of Lawrence in company with her niece, which was the first spectacle that presented itself to her eyes as she opened the cottage door, seemed to call forth the latter characteristic into full play.

“Why do you bring gentlemen here?” she said, turning to the young lady with an angry look. “They have entered our house too often as it is, as I have told you many and many a time, and—but, Lord love us, what have you been doing with the child? Pale as death, and wet through, too, poor lamb! How has this happened, I should like to know?”

“Never mind, aunt, just now,” answered the young lady, “I will explain all by-and

by. Let us get him upstairs to bed. He has not recovered his senses yet, and will be made very ill, if he is not looked after at once. 'Thank you, Sir,' addressing Lawrence. "My aunt and I can carry him upstairs. If you can wait a few minutes," she continued, with some hesitation, seeing his evident unwillingness to go away, "I will let you know how he seems."

Lawrence surrendered his burden to the women, who carried him between them upstairs; and then, seating himself at the table, commenced a fresh examination of the landscapes, which had so charmed him on the occasion of his former visit. After a considerable interval, he heard a light step descending the stairs, and the fair artist entered the room. "I am happy to tell you," she said, "that Freddy has recovered his consciousness, and does not seem the worse, so far as we can judge. We have taken every precaution against a chill, and he seems inclined to sleep. Do not let us detain you any longer, and before you go, let me thank you once more for your generous kindness."

"I will not remain," replied Frank, "but

you must permit me to call, as I ride by to-morrow, and inquire after the little boy's well-doing. I shall be most anxious to hear that he has escaped all ill consequences of his accident. You will not object to that, I hope, will you?"

She hesitated a moment. "If you wish it," she said, in a constrained voice. "I cannot think my aunt—but perhaps it would be better"—she paused a moment, and then said more firmly—"I feel sure my aunt will be glad to see you to-morrow, and tell you how little Freddy is, when she hears how nobly you risked your life in his behalf. But I must beg you to leave us now. My aunt does not at present understand what has happened; and your presence, as you perhaps saw, has awakened some painful associations. So good-bye." She extended her hand to him; which he took, and after a moment's hesitation, raised to his lips. She again coloured, disengaged her hand, and retreated upstairs.

On the following day, no sooner were the morning lectures concluded, and a hasty luncheon despatched, than Lawrence prepared

to set forth again to the scene of yesterday's adventure. But his hopes were destined again to be nipped in the bud. As his scout entered the room to announce that his horse was at the gate, he placed in his hand a letter, which had just arrived by the cross post. Lawrence was on the point of throwing it aside, but a second glance at it induced him to pause. The handwriting, clear and delicate, was plainly that of a lady. His curiosity was excited. He laid down his riding-whip, and opening the envelope, read as follows :—

“ Sir,

“ I am happy to be able to inform you that my little brother is doing well. He is slightly feverish to-day, and my aunt has thought it better to keep him in bed. But the doctor who called yesterday, and again to-day, assures us there is no fear of serious mischief. You will rejoice, I know, that your generous exertions have thus far proved successful : and my aunt, to whom I have fully explained all that passed, begs to unite with me in the expression of our sincere

gratitude for them. Having said this, I trust you will not think me ungracious, if I entreat you not to call here, as you proposed yesterday. My aunt, would, I know, be glad to express to you in person the thanks she now sends through me; but circumstances have occurred in our family, which render her particularly reluctant to receive visitors, not fully known to her. On her account, therefore, I must ask you not to call. Pray believe me.

“Yours truly obliged and gratefully,

“TERESA WALTON.

“June 10, 18—”

Lawrence read the letter twice through, before he could satisfy himself whether he was pleased or vexed at it.

“Teresa Walton,” he repeated. “What a pretty name, and look at the handwriting! She cannot be that Mrs. Newness’s niece. It is impossible; she must be passing herself off as such, for some reason of her own. I wonder how she learned my name and address! Oh, from Wrightsen, of course. I forgot that. Well, I am sorry she won’t



let me call ; but that is evidently the old woman's doing. You see, Teresa says as much. 'On *her* account therefore.' That is almost as much as to say 'On *my* account there is no objection.' (Reader, have you never twisted a lady's letter in the same ingenious manner, into most illogical and unreasonable inferences?) Hem! I can't go there to-day, of course. But if I don't see her again, and that before very long, my name is not Francis Lawrence. Hallo, Dixon, there. Tell them to take the mare back to the stable. She ought to have a day's rest after yesterday's work. And, Dixon, there will be a letter for you to take to the post presently. I have forgotten to send my usual missive to my respected grandfather for the last ten days, and I will do it at once. After that, I think I will go and have a walk with Old Nevinson. He and I have not had a constitutional since the day of our boating party ; and that is more than a week ago."

## CHAPTER IV.

"LETTERS b'aint gone, be they, Jem?" asked Dixon, as he entered the den of his friend the under-porter of St. Jude's College.

"Won't go for eighteen minutes yet," replied Jem, raising his face from the tankard, wherein it had been partially buried, and glancing at the College clock in the Tower opposite, "eighteen minutes and a half, I should say. Hand 'em over, and then sit down and take a drain. This here beer is something like this time! Does the brewer credit, this does!"

"Well," said Dixon, "I don't much mind if I do. This weather makes a man dry—uncommon dry to be sure."

It may be remarked in passing, that there

were but few states of the atmosphere that did not produce this peculiar effect upon his system ; as indeed is frequently the case with gentlemen of his calling. On the present occasion, he was more than usually the victim of thirst, having only had four pints of beer extracted from the buttery in the names of newly imported freshmen, since breakfast that day. He had, moreover, completed his morning's work ; having cleaned the rooms, and carried up the luncheons of all his masters, excepting the freshmen before mentioned ; and no one would think of waiting on them. So he sat down to drink and converse, with a clear conscience.

"Three letters," said the under-porter, thoughtfully, as he spelled over the directions and examined critically the seals, "three letters, and wrote by three very different sorts of gents. I should say there ain't three gents more different, nor the writers of these three letters—not in this college, let alone the 'Varsity. Here's Mr. Nevinson now, he's one of your quiet going ones—the right sort of quiet going ones though. You see, Tummas," (Joe Stephens was noted it should

be remarked, for the soundness of his moral reflections, and indeed was generally known among his friends as the 'Philosopher.') " You see, Tummas, it is a mistake to think as all quiet gents is good for nothing. He don't want much, don't Mr. Nevinson, but he pays handsome for what he do want, let alone Christmas boxes and civil words. He ain't none of your slow chaps, as haven't no blood in their weins, and thinks as no one else haven't any—as stew all day over their books, and cook up stories against the College hoficers, which they brings up, when they comes to be made fellows afterwards—as they always does, worse luck to 'em ! Aggravation it is, to be so took up. There's that Gregson, as has been made Dean this term. Says he to me, last Tuesday morning, when I took up the gate-book. 'Stephens,' says he, 'are you sure, as you've put 'em all down as came in after twelve? I thought I heard the gate unlocked 'twixt one and two (he lives just over it, bust him!) and you know, Stephens,' says he, 'as you used to play that 'ere trick, when I were an undergrivate pretty often.' 'Well, Sir,' says

I, thinking to be civil, 'I don't recollect as I used to let you in at onregular hours either.' 'No, Stephens,' says he, 'but you did my friend Mr. Goldsbury, the gentleman-commoner up my staircase.' There is a memory now for a gentleman, as calls himself a gentleman! I'm a poor man, Tummas Dixon, but I should be ashamed of such a memory as that."

"Shameful," observed Dixon, "them's the sort of people as brings discredit on the College. There's nothing as they won't say and do. I've known 'em, if you'd believe me—I've known 'em lock up their coal-bins when they went away at Christmas, when there wasn't praps half-a-dozen sacks of coals left; and yet they locks them up! How's a poor man to keep his wife and children warm, let alone himself, without coals? But as for Mr. Nevinson, I 'grees with you about him. He ain't praps the best kind of gent; but he's very good of his kind! He keeps a civil tongue in his head, and don't begrudge a man his rights. There's Mr. Lawrence, too—"

"Aye," exclaimed the porter, rapturously,

“Mr. Lawrence, he’s the man for my money,” by which form of speech, he probably meant to say that he was the man for Lawrence’s. “He’s as pleasant as a Punch to talk to, and as full of good humour as that here glass is full of ale; and if he *do* blow a man up now and then, he considers it handsome next day. I couldn’t get that ’ere genelman into trouble, not were it ever so; and he knows it and considers the risk.”

“You’re right,” responded Dixon. “I haven’t waited on a gentleman more to my mind, not all the time I have been in this College; and that’s nineteen years last Lady-Day. He’s not one of your scrubs, as looks close after every tumbler full of wine in his decanter (Mr. Dixon named, perhaps unconsciously, the drinking vessel he most commonly used in discussing his master’s vintage) he knows a man does his work all the better for a little port now and then. I know there’s a difference of opinion in this here subject, though I ain’t a scholar as you are, Mr. Stephens. I won’t presume to lay down the law about it. Perkisites is a difficult pint. There’s some as considers all the

loose silver, as is left about in the room, to belong naterally to the bedmaker. I don't hold with that, at least only 'ceptionally, tho' I respects their opinions that hold it. But I scorns a man as grudges his servant wine, or tea, and that sort ! Why if we give up them, where are we to stop ? Every man must draw the line somewheres ; and I draws it at wine and tea. . Why it was this very term, as one of the freshmen says to me—I wonder what freshmen are getting to, I do—'Dixon,' says he, 'my wine goes faster than I like. I don't know who takes it, unless,' and here he looks at me, as much to say, 'unless—you takes it.' 'Beg your pardon Sir,' says I, 'I've been here this twenty years, afore you came into the College ; and mayhap I shall be here twenty years after you've left it. I ought to know the ways of the College by this time, and I knows as the wine *will* go, and there's no helping it.' I think he was pretty well ashamed of himself, and hasn't said nothink of the kind since, and so he ought to be. And who's this here from, Joe?" said the speaker, taking up the third of the letters he had brought with him.

"Mr. Lawrence gave me this along with his own."

"That," replied Joe, casting it on one side, with great contempt, "that I expect is from that Walsh, and it don't contain no good, I'll pound it. A bad lot that, Tummas, in my judgment."

"I believe you," echoed his companion, improving on the metaphor. "It's a lot as I wouldn't bid for, tho' I saw it going to be knocked down for less than nothing. He's a mean one is that Walsh! Always going about and keeping company with the gentlemen-commoners, and making believe as tho' he were as free-handed and liberal as any on 'em. Why there ain't a greater screw in the place, not Dr. Pincher himself! I've knowed him ask change for a shilling! I have! A pretty sort of fellow that to go about with Mr. Lawrence, as he does. It's a wonder to me how Mr. Lawrence can abide his company!"

"Well, I heard as they had been chums at school, and they lives close to each other at home; and those ties ain't easily shook off," rejoined the philosopher. "But you're right, Tom, in what you says of him. He's mean,



that's it, and he's cunning too. Why what happened last autumn? I was awoke one night, it might be two o'clock or thereabout, by some one tapping at the window, I looks out and there was Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Walsh—'spect they'd been confined to gates by the Principal; but any how they was very import'nate for me to let 'em in, and say nothing about it, 'Let us in,' said Mr. Walsh, 'and be mum, and you shall have a guinea.' Well. I didn't know what to say, I didn't want to get them into trouble, and I didn't want to get into trouble myself, and 'twas as much as my place was worth. Mr. Lawrence sees me hesitate, 'You old villain,' says he—he always speaks friendly and affable, do Mr. Lawrence, 'you old villain,' says he, 'let us in, and I'll give you a guinea.' Well, I remembered as Mr. Lawrence had got into trouble afore, and would praps be rusticated, and I am naturally compassionate hearted; and besides I reflects that they would have to pay two guineas, and that would be a warning to 'em. So I opens the gate, and makes no entry. It were against my conscience," said the Casuist,

“but to do it would have been to help to harm a gent like Mr. Lawrence, who had never done me no harm, and that would have been against my conscience too. So 'twas conscience against conscience you see! Well, Mr. Lawrence he comes next day, and pays me *his* guinea handsome: but when I gives the t'other a hint about his guinea a day or two afterwards, what do he say? ‘Oh, Stephens,’ he says, ‘Mr. Lawrence paid you that guinea, did he not?’ ‘I don’t know what you mean by *that* guinea,’ says I, ‘he paid me *his* guinea, but he didn’t pay me *your’n*.’ ‘There was only one promised, you know,’ says he. ‘I knows nothing of the sort,’ says I. A mean chap he is, and what is more—But I’ve no time to talk any longer, or the letters will be too late.” So saying, the little man caught up his hat, and exchanging a friendly nod, the worthy associates parted.

While they are on their way to the post, we shall take the author’s privilege of perusing and transcribing them for the reader’s benefit. The first was addressed, in a clear, legible hand, to “Mrs. Nevinson, Brathay Hermitage, Keswick,” and ran as follows:—

“ St. Jude’s College,

“ June 11, 18—

“ My dear Mother,

“ I do not wonder that you have been so anxious to hear from me for some time past ; but you must not blame me for having so long kept you in suspense. I could not make up my mind without a good deal of thought. I had always looked forward, ever since I was quite a boy, to being a clergyman, and fancied I was better suited for that life than for any other. And one does not like to give a thing like that up, without being sure one is acting rightly in doing so. No doubt I shall be better off in the world if I accept my uncle’s offer ; but, though I do not pretend to be different from other people in that matter, I should be afraid to let such a consideration influence my decision. I hope it has not done so. I think that my uncle, who is a good man, and has always been like a father, is a better judge of what I am fitted for than I am myself. And I feel that you also think with him, though you do not say so. I have, therefore, now made up my mind to follow his advice. I own I could wish to have taken

my degree before leaving Oxford; but, as it appears that would cause much difficulty, I have given it up, and shall be ready at once to take the clerk's place in the Bank, preliminary to the junior partnership he so kindly offers. I would write to him; but that I know you would like to communicate my determination to him yourself. Give him my love, please, and grateful thanks. Give my love also to cousin Eleanor. To-morrow is her birthday. Only think of her being sixteen years old! Frank Lawrence sends his kind remembrances.

“Your dutiful son,

“W. NEVINSON.”

The second epistle, written in a bold but hasty and straggling hand, was a curious contrast to the first.

“My dear Grandfather,

“I am afraid I have put off writing for an unusually long time, but Oxford engrosses one so much at this time of the year. I don't know now that I have very much to tell you. I have read pretty steadily this

term—for me, that is. I think I have a pretty good character with the tutors. Graydon told me the other day that he thought I should pass creditably ; and wanted me to go in for honours. I don't feel quite up to that, though sometimes I feel half inclined to try. Would you like me to do so, I wonder? I mean to ride Black Bess over to Henley next week to see the Regatta, where we hope our college boat may win the cup. Bess has carried me splendidly this term. John Walsh wants me to go to London with him after the Regatta, but I am not sure I shall go. I have spent more money than I meant this term already. Nevinson stays up to read during the long vacation. I wish I had his perseverance. He is a capital good fellow, and I have seen more of him this term than before. He saved me the other day from getting a considerable thrashing, I expect, from some bargees, who set upon me and another man, as we were coming up from bathing, declaring we had taken their bathing place. I had knocked down two of them, but I could not manage half a dozen. All of a moment Nevinson came up, and bowled

them down right and left! No one in St. Jude's believed he had so much go in him. I shall soon be coming home, so that I will only add that I am, ever

“Your affect. grandson,

“FRANCIS LAWRENCE.”

The third letter, enclosed in an envelope of very thick paper, which effectually baffled the eyes of the curious, was addressed “Joseph Verrall, Esq., 17, High Street, Keswick.” It was, as Dixon and his friend had rightly conjectured, the composition of Walsh.

“My dear Joe,

“All right about the bill. It is not due for some months yet. Goodwood will be over before that, and I am safe to win a good figure there. Oxford is not a bad place for making a book. Some of our fellows here have as empty heads, and as full purses—are as yellow in the pocket and as green in the upper stories, as any man need desire.

“If that should fail, W. will renew, and F. L. is sure to give you his name again. Trust me for that. In any case you may be

sure I shall not peach, so as to get you into trouble with the governor. I have never told anything to your damage, and never will, as long as you stick by me ; though perhaps I may know a thing or two that would rather startle the old bird, eh, Joe ?

“ I am going up next week to London for a lark, with the above named F. L. ; partly, that is to say, for that purpose, though he thinks entirely. He is half inclined to fight shy. I think that slow coach, Nevinson, is getting more influence over him, and will make a saint of him after all. Nevinson is going to stew up in Oxford all this Long, notwithstanding that he is up with his work for the schools already. Everybody to their taste ! Your’s and mine is something different, isn’t it ? (Here follow certain illustrations of the taste of Walsh and his friend, with which we do not propose to edify the reader.)

“ But as for H. H., you are altogether mistaken, though I don’t wonder so much at your mistake. It is true enough that one of my reasons for going up to town just now is to see her ; but I am not playing the game

you suppose. I think I had better make a clean breast of it at once, to prevent mistakes, more particularly as I want your help.

“I must first tell you, what I believe neither you nor any one in the office suspect, that Miss Hicks is a special protégée of Frank’s grandfather, old Lawrence. She is not his natural daughter, as I daresay you are fancying. I don’t know exactly what her connection with General Lawrence is; but I know she is no relation either by blood or by marriage, and *is* a special protégée. The old fellow thinks no one but my father knows this. He has certainly kept it close enough. Never mind *how* I found it out, but I did find out a year or two ago, that the General had left her five thousand pounds. It would hardly pay to marry her at that figure; but it is worth a little civility; and it is as likely as not that he will double or treble the legacy, and then it *would* pay. Or if Master Frank offends him (which it’s odds he will do some day) he may leave her half his fortune. I’m a little inclined to think he did do something handsome for her, a twelvemonth ago, after that attack of his. But the governor was



uncommon close on that occasion ; took neither you nor me, but that stupid Masters, out of whom one can never get anything.

“ Well, to resume—one fine day, when I was going up to London, instead of putting the paternal epistle, addressed to Miss H., into the post as usual, I took it to Miss Gurnet’s Academy and delivered it myself. By Jove! Joe, she was worth going to see, let alone her chance of old Lawrence’s shiners. I haven’t seen a finer girl I don’t know when. She wasn’t very shy ; in fact, I guess she’s as wide awake a girl as any going. We got on swimmingly. I was respectful, of course, and that sort of thing ; and I don’t think she was displeased at my visit, either then or the other time when I called. But, of course, I can’t go there, except on business with the old cat who keeps the school. She’d be writing to the governor, and hinting mischief, if she thought I went there to look up H. H. So you must please to send me the letter containing the quarterly settlement, which is due now in a day or two, instead of posting it. Nothing may come of it ; but the old General is getting very shaky. I think it as likely as

not that he will drop off the hooks one of these days. If it should turn out that he has left her a handsome slice, then the thing would do well enough. If not, anyhow there is no harm done.

"So now that you see my hand, you must play up to me. I will do you as good a turn some day, when you want it.

"I shall be down at Keswick in a week or two. I hope we shall have a jolly summer. Certainly it will be none the less jolly for Nevinson's absence.

"Yours ever,

"J. WALSH."

For the further information of the reader, we will enlighten him as to the manner, so mysteriously alluded to in the above letter, by which its writer became acquainted with the facts relative to General Lawrence and Miss Hicks. A year or two previously he had chanced to enter his father's sanctum, just as the latter had stepped into the outer office to speak with a stranger. On the table lay an open letter which his father had not finished reading, when summoned by his

visitor. Jack, who was by no means scrupulous in such matters, took it up, and glanced at its contents. To do him justice, his only motive at first was to see whether it contained any reference to certain debts of his, which he was anxious to conceal from the paternal eye. Finding that it in no way concerned him, he was about to replace it, when the signature of James Lawrence at the end caught his eye. This roused his curiosity. He had only time to give the letter a hasty perusal; but he was enabled, nevertheless, to gather from it that the General was deeply interested in an orphan girl, named Harriet Hicks; that he had borne for many years the expense of her education; and was not only prepared to fit her for holding in society the position of a lady, but even to charge himself to some extent with her future maintenance. Mr. Walsh was instructed to prepare a codicil to the General's will, by which the sum of five thousand pounds would be secured to her at his death, provided always that he continued to be satisfied with her behaviour. The letter concluded with a strict injunction to keep Miss

Hicks in complete ignorance of her anonymous benefactor, and above all his testamentary intentions towards herself. "She is none of my kin," the General wrote, and Walsh had the words by heart, "no drop of my blood runs in her veins. I owe her and hers nothing; less than nothing! If I choose to indulge an idle fancy, and bequeath her five thousand pounds, or ten thousand pounds, or the whole of the Derwent Court Estate—at least let the world know nothing of it while I live."

Jack had had time to make his escape from the room before his father's return to it. Nor had the latter the slightest suspicion that his client's secret had become known to his son.

## CHAPTER V.

SOME people are fond of devising tests whereby you may read a man's character, without giving yourself much trouble. "Shew me a man's friends," says one, "and I will shew you him." "Give me a scrap of a man's handwriting," says another, "and I will give you the entire man, as surely as the late Professor Owen would have described a *Dinorbis*—its form, size, and habits from a few fossilised footprints, or a single fragment of bone." Others maintain precisely the opposite theory, and contend that nothing is more fallacious than these general deductions from minute details. One lively writer goes

so far as to affirm that you will never thoroughly understand your neighbour's character, until you have divided an inheritance with him ; while another suggests that possibly taking a lengthened tour in his company may suffice for the purpose.

The last-named test is, at all events, a pretty severe one. Did we not ourselves believe that our old college friend, Tom Halford, was the mildest and most accommodating of human kind—did we not for that very reason choose him to be the companion of our long vacation wanderings? And did we not, in the third week of our tour, come to such a quarrel with him at Heidelberg, as has never yet been wholly made up? Did he not persist in hurrying on where we ought to have lingered, and in lingering where we ought to have hurried on? And had he not afterwards the effrontery to declare to a mutual friend, that the pleasure of the tour had been spoilt by *our* selfishness? *our* selfishness! when he knows as well as possible—but perhaps this is a little beside the matter immediately in hand.

Without presuming to pronounce on

these abstract questions, we may venture to affirm that that particular variety of the genus man, the Oxford undergraduate—may be described with tolerable accuracy from a careful examination of the rooms which he inhabits. Look at his book-shelves. Do they contain a range of ragged old school books, with ricketty backs, and covers garnished with the various soubriquets wherewith his master or his schoolfellows were wont to be complimented by his pen long long ago ; interspersed perhaps with a few of newer aspect, but got evidently for the college lectures ; and among which cribs, as they are technically termed, occupy no trivial place ? Or do they exhibit long rows of smartly bound volumes, all green and scarlet and gold, like regiments at a royal review ? Or, once more, do their contents consist of neat, unpretending, but serviceable looking tomes—some of which bear evidence of having anciently formed part of the paternal library ; while others, carefully encased in leather covers, and studded thick with markers, lie on the table, or the high reading desk ? It would not be difficult to construct the

entire animal from a few traces like these.

Or, again, look at the walls. Are they enriched with the likenesses of opera dancers, pirouetting on one toe, or red-coated gentry clearing park walls, and half-submerged in swollen brooks ; or, perhaps, *proh pudor !* with prizefighters, disfiguring the human face divine, for the unworthy consideration of three hundred pounds a side ? Or, again, is an engraving of Bolton Abbey suspended over the mantelpiece, with " the Challenge " and " the Sanctuary " to the right and left, while the opposite wall is adorned with the " Castle of Heidelberg," or the " Highland Dream," or some of the late Mr. Frank Stone's graceful sentimentalities ? Or yet, once more, are the walls wholly bare, or only garnished by the rude water-colour sketch of what appears to be a parsonage house, with one or two photographs on pasteboard, unframed and fastened by pins against the walls ? Whoever studies these and the like phenomena, may form a shrewd guess as to the character of the individual to whom they appertain.

Nevinson's rooms at least formed no except-



ion to the rule. The plain, solid, but tidy furniture ; the decent, well-worn serviceable books, the portrait of his old headmaster between the windows, and of the Principal of his college over the bookcase ; together with a somewhat dingy oil-painting, surmounting the mantelpiece, and bearing a distant resemblance to himself, which suggested the likelihood of its being a family portrait—all spoke the man, as plainly as the most elaborate description could have done.

Nevinson was seated near the window, which commanded a pleasant view of the college gardens, with a glimpse of the road beyond them. The reading-table, denuded of its ordinary garniture, was spread with decanters, glasses, and dessert ; and at the opposite corner sat another young man, apparently of about the same age, or a year or two older than himself, but so different in his appearance from the generality of undergraduates, that no one who had once seen him could fail to recognise him at a second meeting. His face was thin and colourless ; and his hair and eyes, of the deepest black, contrasted strongly and somewhat unpleasantly

with it. His features were not irregular in their outline. The high, though narrow forehead, gave some promise of intellectual power, and there was fixity of purpose plainly legible in the firm and massive jaw. But the melancholy, almost moody, expression which characterised them while in repose; and which was replaced occasionally by a sudden gleam of excitement flashing over them, like the lightning over a dark mass of cloud, involuntarily awakened an interest, but scarcely of an agreeable character.

Neither host nor guest seemed disposed for conversation; Nevinson pushed the decanter over to his friend, who filled his glass in compliance with the invitation, but suffered it to stand untasted before him; and both again relapsed into the abstraction for which they had momentarily roused themselves. There was indeed enough in the prospect before them to absorb their attention. The season of lionessess had already set in, and the College gardens were enlivened by bonnets and dresses of every colour and pattern, the fair wearers chaperoned by dons and undergraduates in the most unexceptional costume;

all as bright and smooth as if they had been depicted on one of the highly varnished screens, or blotting books, wherewith Mr. Spiers's shop is adorned. Beyond the college wall the road was thronged with groups of young men ; some on horseback, some afoot, on their way to the evening ride, or row—amusements only to be enjoyed in their perfection towards the end of the summer term.

Each had fair excuse for silence in the contemplation of that ever moving kaleidoscope. But Nevinson's thoughts were not engrossed by its attractions. He was reflecting somewhat sadly on the change in his prospects, which the resolution he had that morning adopted, would occasion ; and its probable influence on his future life. He was not much given to flights of imagination, but he had nevertheless been wont to picture to himself a quiet parsonage house among the lakes and mountains of Westmoreland, with a daily round of simple and solemn duties—nay, there had even been a vision of a fair young face, which would welcome him on his return to his fireside, and drive away all troubles and vexations, even if any such

could intrude on a future so delightful. The determination of the morning had rudely destroyed this ideal paradise. True, he might have the fireside still, and, perhaps the fair face too ; nor would the time of the realisation of these fancies be delayed ; for she on whom his thoughts dwelt so tenderly was, as yet, too young for any smiles but those of unconscious girlhood. Nor did he doubt that he had acted rightly, or wish to recall his decision. William Nevinson was one of those stedfast characters, upon whom it is difficult to produce any impression, but still more difficult to efface one when it has been produced. But the first dream of duty is as beautiful and as sacred as the first dream of love ; nor can the sober realities of after-life ever fully compensate for its frustration.

The two had sat for nearly a quarter of an hour, each busy with his own reflections, when Nevinson suddenly roused himself to a sense of his duties as a host. " I really beg your pardon, Pascoe," he said, " I am very forgetful, I am afraid. But, after all, one has no need to talk, when there is such a view as this to look at. What a glorious sunset !

I really think Oxford looks better on a summer evening like this, than at any other time in the year."

"Yes," said Pascoe, without turning his face to his companion, and speaking as though he were only half-conscious of his presence, "Oxford is a beautiful place—beautiful to look at, that is—there is no doubt of that."

"Well, that is something for you to admit," observed Nevinson, with a good-natured smile, "more than I think I ever heard you admit before. We are getting on. You will be a dutiful son of Alma Mater before you have done with her, now."

"I never denied the architectural beauty of Oxford," said Pascal, "that is the general architectural effect; for as regards detail, there are few really fine specimens of architecture in the University. As for Oxford in all other respects, you have heard what I think about it, and I am not likely to change my opinion. If anything, it grows more confirmed with every term I pass there."

"I have heard you talk with other men about it," said Nevinson, "but I fancy both

you and they were led on to say more than was really meant."

"I don't know what you may have heard me say," observed Pascoe, bluntly, "but I know what I feel and think; and that is, that the whole system at Oxford is rotten to the core."

"That is to say," said Nevinson, "it does not fulfil your idea of what it ought to be."

"No, of what it professes to be. Look here, Nevinson, I have now been for eighteen months and more resident in Oxford, and during all that time, I have been trying to get men to join our Mission. Now might not one have hoped that in a place where so many men profess to be preparing themselves for the special service of Christ—some, at least, would have been found willing to follow, where His banner is so visibly displayed?"

"You might have hoped it certainly. I am not sure you might have expected it."

"Expected it! why not? Was I to assume that all were so utterly hollow in their professions?"

"Certainly not. But the men you speak

of come up here intending to prepare themselves for the service of the Church at home. That implies a willingness to study certain subjects, and perform certain duties—”

“And lead a life dedicated to the service of God,” interposed Pascoe.

“Certainly. Who is there that is *not* required to lead such a life—priest or layman?” asked his companion.

“Of course, of course,” said Pascoe impatiently. “But men who mean to take orders, undertake something more than other men do—you will allow that?”

“Yes. They undertake the duties of an English clergyman. But you ask them to undertake duties quite different from what they had contemplated; most probably to resign prospects arranged for them by parents and friends; in many instances to disappoint long cherished hopes and carefully matured schemes for good.”

“Ah, Nevinson, that is the old story. If men are to reason thus, what is to become of the heathen world? Oh! my friend,” he continued, his face kindling with enthusiasm as he spoke, “was it thus that the first

planters of the Faith reasoned? If they had talked of paramount duties at home—of parents, and brothers, and neighbours and all that—what would have become of Christianity? Would it not have perished in its cradle? What is to become of men's souls abroad, if all the ministers of Christ are to stay at home?"

"What is to become of men's souls at home, if they are all to go abroad?" asked Nevinson. "You quote the instance of the first preachers of the Gospel. Do you remember that the Twelve Apostles were sent to their own countrymen first; and refused to leave their native land, for the purpose of preaching the Gospel to the heathen abroad, until it was no longer possible for them to preach it at home."

"The Apostles had a special command on that subject," said Pascoe, "which other men have not."

"Granted," said his companion, "but that command was in strict accordance with all previous commissions to preach and teach. The Jewish prophets all ministered to their own countrymen only, unless when specially



sent to foreign lands. Our Lord, Himself, never went beyond the bounds of the Holy Land during all His career as a teacher on earth."

"And who then is to carry the Gospel to the heathen?" cried Pascoe.

"Those whom He raises up for the work," answered Nevinson, "as He did Paul and Barnabas, Francis Xavier, and Henry Martyn. It is His work, and He will, doubtless, find men to do it. Do not think I undervalue the task you have undertaken. I only ask you not to condemn hastily those who refuse to take part in it. The Church has work enough at home, and more than enough, to occupy the attention of all who are willing to serve her. But I honour your zeal and devotion; and should like to hear more particulars about your mission, than you have, as yet, told me. When do you mean to sail, and what is the plan you have laid out?"

"Our intention, at present, is to leave England next spring—about April or May, I suppose," said Pascoe. "I hope to have learned the language by that time, enough

to speak it pretty fluently. My companions do not know as much of it as I do; but they have made good progress this Term, and Todd says, he thinks that by next spring they will understand it enough to be able to preach to the natives. Some of our party, who have only lately joined us, will know very little about it; but we shall be able to act as interpreters between them and the inhabitants, and they will soon improve. Our funds are, of course, less than we require; but in that way, I must allow, we have a great deal of kind help."

"And you have some connection with some Christians already there, I think?"

"Yes. An attempt was made five or six years ago to introduce the Gospel into the island, and some few converts have been made. But the work languishes, chiefly for want of labourers."

"Does the Government tolerate the missionaries?" asked Nevinson.

"It did at first; and of late it has paid very little heed to them. But, of course, at any moment a persecution may break out. It could hardly be hoped that in a land which

has been so directly given over to Satan as Madagascar, there would not be made the most determined efforts to hinder our work."

"I suppose the worship there is very horrible?"

"Yes, indeed—the worship of Satan himself. Everything that is revolting and degrading in the religion of the ancient world seems to be concentrated there. It is the darkest spot, I verily believe, on the face of God's earth."

"And of how many does your number consist? You call it a fraternity, I believe."

"The Brotherhood of the Faith," returned Pascoe. "We drop all but our Christian names, meaning that as a sign that we have given up everything belonging to our former state. There are, at present, three besides myself. There is Curtis, of Stafford—"

"Aye, I remember," said Nevinson. "He broke his collar bone, did he not, by a fall from his horse, when he was riding home from Woodstock?"

"Yes," said Pascoe, "after a drunken supper-party there. And Gilbertson, of St. Peter's, who, as I daresay, you may have

heard, was a defaulter at Ascot last year, and suspected of some underhand dealings for which he was renounced by all his friends. They are neither of them ashamed to own what they have been. If it had not been for the shame of the exposure, it is very likely they would never have taken up the work at all. And there is Harding also. He had only just come up to Oxford from his father's Parsonage-house. But the moment he heard of our mission, he professed his desire to join us ; and nothing that his friends could say have ever shaken his resolution in the least. And a fortnight ago, another man, Fletcher, of Winifred Hall, came and told me that he would go with us, if we would have him. He has had a great disappointment of some kind, and the life we are likely to lead is the only one that seems endurable to him. We only want one more now to make up our number of six ; and I do not doubt he will appear in time. But, as I said before, Nevins-son, Oxford has done little for us, or rather nothing. All those whom we have gained have been—not those who have been taught and formed by her system, but the outcasts

on whom she looked coldly, if she had not finally rejected them."

"We need not discuss that again," said Nevinson, with a smile. "I think the account you have given me bears out more fully than I could have expected what I had already said. But, Pascoe, you have made no mention of any formal recognition of your work by the Church. Do you not mean to seek ordination for yourself and your friends at the hands of some Bishop, before you set out on this mission. It would not, I am pretty sure, be refused."

"It will never be refused," broke in Pascoe, impetuously, "because it will never be asked. This thing is not of man, but of God. Those whom He has directly called, as He has us, to perform His bidding, do not need man's authority. Nor will we be bound by fetters, which, for the most part, are of man's forging."

He paused for a moment; but it was evidently only for a moment. Nevinson had unluckily touched on a subject upon which he could never remain silent. The former felt extremely embarrassed. He was

anxious not to offend Pascoe, for whom he had a sincere respect: but he saw in a moment that no amount of discussion would induce them to agree on this point, or have any other effect than that of increasing Pascoe's excitement.

To his great relief, at this moment, steps were heard ascending the staircase, and a knock at the door followed. Leave to enter was readily given, and Lawrence, with hat and stick, prepared for a walk, straightway presented himself.

## CHAPTER VI.

"HA! Nevinson, all alone, hey?" exclaimed Lawrence, not seeing Pascoe, who, in his excitement, had been pacing up and down the room for some minutes past, and was now concealed by the door which the other had thrown open, "all alone, hey? and preparing for the regular constitutional, of course? Dinner in hall; half an hour's rest, and two glasses of port or sherry for digestion; and then an evening walk. That is the regular thing, is it not? Who is the other party this evening; will he admit me, '*tertium sodalitati*,' as Dionysius condescendingly inquired of Damon and Pythias?"

"I was not engaged to any one this evening," replied Nevinson—"that is, I believe

you said you should not be able to go for a walk, did you not, Pascoe?"

Lawrence turned hastily round, and was somewhat disconcerted to find himself face to face with the person named. Though belonging to the same college, and personally acquainted, they had always carefully kept aloof from one another: Lawrence viewing Pascoe as half a madman, and wholly a bore, and Pascoe regarding Lawrence as one of the worst types of what he abhorred above all things—the easy-going undergraduate.

A very cold and formal bow was exchanged between them: and then Pascoe, addressing Nevinson, replied that he should be unable to accompany him, being engaged, as he added, somewhat defiantly turning to Lawrence, "to a prayer meeting at Winifred's Hall;" and without more words he took up his cap and gown, and departed.

Lawrence made no remark, until they had cleared the High Street; and passing under the noble tower, that stands like a giant war-der at the entrance of the grandest of England's cities, had crossed Magdalen Bridge,



and were making for the breezy solitudes of Shotover. Then he broke silence.

"Now we are well out of hearing, I should like to ask you, what on earth you can find in that man's company, to make it worth your while to endure it."

"What man's company?" asked Nevinson, "Pascoe's, do you mean?"

"Yes, Pascoe's to be sure. I have found him with you once or twice before. I'm not a man to object to the society of quiet men, or even of Saints, if you like it—as you know, Nevinson. But that man seems to me to be simply the most uncivil brute I ever encountered. I am sure his mode of preaching is not very likely to make proselytes unless it be to the opposite side to that which he takes."

"You don't understand him, Lawrence," said Nevinson, "I don't agree with his views, and I admit that his manner is likely to give offence; but I can't help respecting him, and I feel I ought to like him better than I do."

"What is one to like and respect him for?" asked Lawrence.

"For his sincerity and self-devotion," rejoined Nevinson, "and for the manner

in which he has borne a great disappointment, which most men would have taken very differently. Perhaps you don't know his history," he added, seeing that Lawrence did not appear to understand the allusion. "I believe many of our men do not."

"Not I," said Lawrence, "I never heard anything about his history, that I know of. What was there remarkable in it?"

"He was the son of a very rich man," replied Nevinson, "who had made his fortune abroad in some mysterious, and, as most people thought, discreditable manner. He was professedly a Portuguese merchant, trading with Madagascar and the West African ports; but it was whispered that he was concerned in the slave trade."

"Likely enough," remarked Lawrence, "half the Portuguese merchants are, if the truth is told about them."

"At any rate" resumed Nevinson, "he married the daughter of a Portuguese; who had acquired a large fortune by contraband trade of some kind, and brought her to England immediately afterwards. Pascoe was their only son, and was brought up

almost entirely by his mother. She was not a Papist, but a Jewess, who had been converted to Christianity by one of our missionaries out there. I suppose the stories she told him of the spiritual state of Madagascar, must have produced a strong impression on him when a boy. As he was his father's only child, he was of course always taught to believe himself the heir of great wealth; but on his father's death, which happened three or four years ago, it was found that he had left his whole property to some woman in Lisbon, by whom he had a large family of illegitimate children."

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Lawrence, "that was enough to sour a fellow indeed. Was he left without anything at all of his own?"

"There was the mother's fortune, a few thousands," replied Nevinson, "that was all. But the loss of the money was not the worst. His mother was taken ill soon afterwards, and died of a fever that broke out in the neighbourhood. Pascoe himself caught it from her, and had a very narrow escape of his life."

"Poor fellow!" again ejaculated Frank, "I shall always regard him very differently in future. I don't wonder that he doesn't think very well of the world. He has had but little reason to do so."

"Yes," said Nevinson, "I think what has befallen him would make most men quite reckless about what became of others at all events. But it has had just the opposite effect with him."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, I mean that it made him take up this scheme that he has been working for the last two or three years—that of getting up a mission to Madagascar. It seems that his family have some connection still with a few Christians residing in one of the principal towns; who were converted at the same time as Pascoe's mother, and who always secretly held the faith. They think that there is an opening there just now, and hope that a mission might be tolerated by the authorities, though of course there is great risk of persecution, and even of death. But Pascoe has given up all his fortune, such as it is, and means to proceed there with the two or three

helpers he has secured, as soon as he has thoroughly mastered the language."

"That is what he stays up in Oxford for, is it?" inquired Lawrence. "I should have thought he would have found some difficulty in finding any one, who could instruct him in it."

"Well, I believe it was a great chance that he did. But Todd of Poynings was resident in Madagascar for many years when he was a boy, and can speak it fluently. He was much interested in Pascoe, and, I believe, has stayed a considerable time in Oxford on his account."

"Pascoe will be up during the Long then, I suppose," observed Lawrence. "You will have the benefit of his company all the summer."

"No, Todd is going to take a friend's duty somewhere in Oxfordshire, I believe, and Pascoe is to pass the summer with him in the parsonage."

"Well then, there will be one the less for you to talk to" said Lawrence, "and that I should think would be a serious consideration, even although that person was not a

remarkably lively acquaintance. I confess I envy the courage of any man, who can voluntarily encounter Oxford in the Long Vacation. I passed a day in it last September, when I happened to be late for the mail on my way to Derwent Court; and I mean to make that experience suffice for the rest of my life. Nobody in the streets but scouts and bedmakers, coming out in their master's clothes, and as nearly as they could manage it, in their master's style! nothing in the colleges but paint and whitewash, and a few of the dreariest of the Dons, who looked as if they were condemned for their sins, to haunt these regions of everlasting dullness! Well, what is the team to be?"

"There were to have been six," replied Nevinson, "five besides me."

"Six, eh? and who is to drive?"

"Oh, don't you know? Peyton, of St. James's, I thought I had told you. But, Frank—"

"Peyton, of St. James's! oh, aye, you did tell me. I know him a little. I met him at the High Table at St. Peters, when I dined with Murtough O'Toole, one of the

Gentleman-commoners there. An awful Don is Peyton, mind you, though he affects not to be one. He tries to talk to men in their own style, and a proper mess he makes of it."

"Yes," said Nevinson, "that's true. I have heard him make one or two very absurd mistakes myself. It is a pity, for he is a good man, and kindhearted too."

"It was as good as a play the day I met him," said Lawrence, "he began talking to O'Toole about horses and hunting, of which he knows about as much as I do of High Dutch. O'Toole, who is fresh from the wilds of Galway, listened awhile in astonishment, half fancying that Peyton intended to hoax him. At last he broke in upon one of his remarks with a genuine Irish guffaw, loud enough to cause all eyes to be turned upon him. Peyton drew himself up with all the dignity he could muster. 'I am afraid you are forgetting yourself a little, Mr. O'Toole,' he said. 'Forget myself! is it forget myself?' says O'Toole. 'Wouldn't ye laugh at me now, if I were to take to lecturing you about sines, and wonders, and eclipses (Murtough's ac-

quaintance with conic sections is but a limited one) and isn't it laughable for you to be lecturing me about dogs and horses, when I judge ye don't know a horse's leg from a cow's! But never mind that,' added Murtough kindly, seeing that Peyton still looked glum, 'never mind that, Peyton, my boy! Let's forgive and forget, and take a glass of wine together, just to drown unkindness!'

"What did Peyton say to that?" asked Nevinson who was a good deal amused.

"Oh, to do him justice, he is good-natured enough; and I don't think there is a man alive, who wouldn't have burst out laughing. Well, so he is to be your coach is he, through this dreary Long?"

"He was to have been. But I was going to tell you, Frank. I have given up the idea of reading with him this Long Vacation, and am going to call on him this evening and tell him so."

"Given it up! What you, William Nevinson, change your plans! Why what has come to you? Where are you going instead?"

"Home," replied the other quietly. "I



leave Oxford at the end of this term, and do not mean to return."

"Going to leave Oxford! You take my breath away! Why what does all this mean? You are too sober a fellow to have got into a scrape, or I should think—why term will be over in a few days! Well this beats anything for suddenness! Once more, what does it mean?"

"Much what I told you," rejoined his friend. "I had always intended, you know, to take my degree, and go into Orders."

"Aye, to be sure. You have not given *that* up too, have you? And yet if you had not, of course you would not be leaving Oxford. Why, Nevinson, once more, and for the third time of asking, what in the world does all this mean?"

"I was going to tell you. I have laid aside my intention of taking Orders, and am going into my uncle's bank."

"Whew!" exclaimed Lawrence, with a long whistle. "Is that it? Here's a falling off to the flesh-pots of Egypt! But I beg your pardon, Nevinson," he added more gravely, for he saw that his companion was

really annoyed. "I ought not to talk so. And seriously, I think you have made a mistake. I do not know a fellow more completely cut out for a good parson than you. And you are not the sort of fellow to care for money either—"

"I can't explain the matter, Frank," interposed Nevinston, hastily, and with an embarrassment very unusual with him. "But it is to be so. I mean to go to Peyton this evening, and tell him about it. I am half afraid he will think I have used him ill; for there is but little chance of his filling my vacancy so late in the day as this. You don't know any one, I am afraid, who wants to join a reading party?"

Lawrence made no reply to this question. It had occurred to him at the moment, that he might take his friend's place himself, and remain in Oxford during the Long Vacation. His interview with the beautiful artist had changed the whole current of his thoughts. He was now more than ever bent on seeing and learning all about her. It had greatly damped the satisfaction which his partial success had afforded him to be obliged to

admit to himself that there was a probability of her having left the neighbourhood of Oxford before the end of the vacation; in which case his chance of seeing her again would be but small. Besides, during term time he could hardly visit at her aunt's cottage without the fact becoming known to his companions; and that would be in the highest degree distasteful to him. It would be altogether different during the Long Vacation. There would be no one in Oxford then to play the spy, or the censor either. Still he hesitated. Conscience warned him that he would be doing a foolish—it might be a worse than foolish thing, if he yielded to this fancy.

What resolution he might have adopted, if he had been left to himself, cannot be determined. The Author of Mischief seldom does leave people to themselves under such circumstances. At this moment the sound of horses' feet behind them caused them both to turn round, and they saw two riders approaching at a fast trot. They pulled up when they saw Lawrence.

"Ah, Frank," said Walsh, for he was one

of the horsemen, "we called at your rooms to ask you to join us; but Dixon said you were engaged to ride with some one else. You don't know what you have missed."

"That is true, Jack," returned Lawrence, "with the exception of your charming company, I am not aware of having missed anything."

"Charming company, hey!" interposed Walsh's companion, with a smirk, "you might have talked of charming company, if you had been with us half an hour ago. Here has Jack Walsh fallen over head and ears in—what do you think?"

"A ditch, and a proper muddy one I should guess, by the state of his coat and trousers," replied Lawrence. "Where have you been, Lawford?"

"Round by Thorleigh," said Lawford, "shall I tell them, Jack, what we saw in Thorleigh Wood, or are you afraid Frank will go and cut you out? He is shy about it before company," pursued Lawford, as Walsh showed signs of impatience, "but you should have seen him just now."

"Drop that!" exclaimed Walsh, "we can't

stay here to chaff. We shall be late for Hillier's supper party as it is. Frank," he shouted, turning back after he had ridden a dozen yards, "I'll look in late to-night, and settle with you about the trap for our London excursion. That old villain, Doubleman, wants a lot of money for it, but we'll talk over the matter," and, without waiting for an answer, he rode off.

Lawrence watched him uneasily. It was strange how Lawford's careless jesting annoyed him. It was not very likely that it was Teresa whom they had seen; even if it was, it was not likely that they would attempt to see her again; and it was less likely still that she would allow them to intrude themselves upon her. Nevertheless, the incident troubled him more than he chose to acknowledge to himself. His fancy pictured to him some more enterprising and fortunate fellow getting, either by chance or design, the introduction to her, and establishing the intimacy, he had desired for himself. And then he would have the field entirely to himself for three or four months. Perhaps the fellow so favoured by fortune

would be one of that very Long Vacation party, of which Nevinson had been speaking. The temptation was too strong for his impulsive and undisciplined nature. It turned the doubtful scale. "I can't have that any how," he half muttered to himself, as he paced along by the side of his friend, who was also apparently engaged with his own thoughts. "Come what may, I can't have that; there is that fellow Hillier going to stop up, and he'll hear of her, as likely as not, through Lawford—no, that won't do! anything before that!"

He resumed the conversation, which the appearance of Walsh and Lawford had broken off. "What were we talking about, William," he said, "when those fellows came up with us? Oh, I remember, about Peyton's Long Vacation party. What makes you think he will not be able to fill up your place?"

"Because it is so near the end of term," answered Nevinson. "All the reading men must have made up their parties by this time. Besides it is not every one who will consent to stay up in Oxford during the Long Vacation,

as you were just now observing. I have no doubt you are right in your description. It must be dull enough."

"Hem!" said Lawrence, a little embarrassed at the recollection of his own remarks. "Yes, dulness itself, no doubt, to any one who cares for amusement. But it would be all the better for a fellow who really wanted to read."

"Yes," replied his companion "there is no doubt of that. That was one of the considerations which made me choose it. But as I was saying just now, all the men of that sort are safe to have made their arrangements long ago. The worst of the thing is that Peyton is a poor man, and the money he gets by pupils is an object to him. But one couldn't offer to pay him. He'd be certain to refuse."

"I tell you what," said Lawrence, "I think I know a fellow who would be game to take your place, if Peyton would agree to have him. But of that I don't feel at all sure. He has the character, unluckily, of being rather a noisy man—not one of your regular fast goers, perhaps; but hardly one of Pey-

ton's sort, that is, supposing he is very particular."

"I don't think Peyton is what you call particular," replied Nevinson. "He wouldn't be likely to refuse any one who meant to read, and who wasn't a downright snob."

"Oh, he means to read, of course," rejoined Frank, though with some embarrassment. "He means to read—in moderation, that is."

"And he is not a snob, you say?"

"I hope not," returned Frank, drily.

"Why, what in the world do you mean?" exclaimed Nevinson, pausing for a moment in his walk, and eyeing his companion with curiosity. "You are not speaking of yourself, I suppose? And yet I do believe you are! Well, Francis Lawrence, of all the strange fellows I have ever known, you are the strangest! Why it was not ten minutes ago that you were to be off with Walsh on some expedition or other, and were declaiming on the impossibility of staying in Oxford during the Long!"

"And well, William Nevinson, it is not very long ago since you were intending to



remain in Oxford all the summer, and now you are going to leave at a moment's notice. Do you think no one has a right to change his mind, but yourself? I am your man if you can persuade Peyton to take me. I think the old Principal will let me stay up, if he does. I am rather a favourite with the old boy, I fancy. And I will coach up my collections double extra next week, and astonish the Dons for once."

Finding that his friend was serious in his resolution, Nevinson made the application to Mr. Peyton, and with success. Lawrence had spoken no more than the truth when he had said, that nothing had been laid to his charge beyond a little want of steadiness. He was a gentleman in his demeanour, and passed muster fairly well at lectures. He was clever, too, and well informed; if he chose to work, he might make a figure in the class-list. Besides, Nevinson was right in thinking that money was an object with Mr. Peyton, who had a mother and two sisters to support. He therefore gave his consent even more readily than Nevinson had expected. A few words to the Principal, guarantee-

ing Mr. Lawrence's good behaviour, obtained the desired permission to reside in college.

Walsh exhibited great vexation when he heard of the change in Frank's plans, and did his best to talk him out of it; but, for once, without any success. The utmost he could get out of Lawrence was a promise to accompany him to London for a day or two, until the men had gone down. When he returned, the college was almost deserted, and in another week Oxford had settled down into its usual Long Vacation aspect.

## CHAPTER VII.

THERE is a pleasant residence, half cottage, half villa, well known to the lovers of the picturesque, on the southern bank of the Lake of Derwentwater. The artist roaming over these Elysian scenes, in search of subjects, wherewith to embellish the walls of the Royal Academy in the ensuing spring, suspends his journey as he beholds, and straightway draws forth sketch-book and pencil; unconscious that the title "Brathay Hermitage, Derwentwater" has already been inscribed, in fancy, in the Catalogue of the aforesaid Academy by no less than three of his wandering brotherhood. The newly wedded turtles, who wing their flight northwards, to coo the honeymoon away amid green moun-

tains, and blue skies and waters, whisper to each other that there lies the spot they would prefer to all others, if fate permitted their sojourn there. Even the *habitué* of Change Alley—who, though he be for a while *solutus omni fenore* yet dwells fondly in imagination in stock and scrip, and Peruvian bonds—even he condescends to view it approvingly, as his boat is rowed by its sloping lawns, and to express his approval to the partner of his gold, with the high eulogium “that it seems a tidy place enough.”

In this favoured spot early in the afternoon of a brilliant day in August, two ladies were seated under the verandah, which screened the southern windows of the house. The lawn, which descended easily to the waterside, had evidently been prepared for that most delightful of all entertainments, if King Weather be propitious, that climax of wretchedness, if his Majesty be out of humour—a garden party. Baskets of flowers had been gracefully disposed and seats scattered negligently over the undulating turf; a band of musicians in scarlet uniforms were assembling in a summer-house which crowned a knoll in

the centre of the grounds ; and refreshment tents pitched here and there in shady nooks, supplied the *desideratum*, without which an Englishman's enjoyment is never complete.

The ladies were both in gala costume, but otherwise bore little resemblance to one another. One was five-and-forty, at the least ; the other hardly sixteen. The former retained the traces of decided beauty, and her dress was a masterpiece of feminine skill. The sober, but rich, grey silk, the black lace mantle and bonnet, indicated decorous, but not recent, widowhood. A few delicate flowers in the last-named article reminded the spectator that the charms of youth were not wholly gone. Mrs. Nevinson was a most popular person. She had the knack of putting people, whom she met, at their ease ; saying just the right thing *to* the right person while they were present, which greatly gratified them. Also of saying the right thing *of* them after they were gone, which might not have gratified them so much ; but then she took care that they should never hear it. She was in truth a thorough woman of the world ; of course enjoying the credit of acting

on the most amiable of motives ; equally, of course, never letting slip an opportunity of serving her own interests. When she did a shabby thing, she simply *did* it, and said nothing about it. When she judged it politic to make a concession, she made it frankly and cheerfully. She was wont to enlarge greatly on the merits of friends, who might be serviceable to her ; wont likewise to deplore the failings of those, from whom nothing was to be hoped. But then she always spoke of the latter with such an *evident* wish to judge as favourably as possible, that a sense of her amiability always grew on those with whom she talked.

The younger lady was, as has been said, a remarkable contrast to her. Her features were not regular. But for a pair of brilliant hazel eyes, and a profusion of dark braided hair, she might have been thought absolutely plain. Nor had she apparently taken pains to make the best of herself. She looked *gauche* and angular in her book-muslin dress ; the geraniums in her bonnet did not suit her style, and there was a general air of discomfort about her. Perhaps she cared little for

society generally ; perhaps there was no one among Mrs. Nevinson's guests in whom she felt interested that day. A close observer would also have surmised, that although she occasionally addressed her companion as "Aunt," there was no near relationship between them.

There was, in truth, none at all. Margaret Dennis and Eleanor Vere had been wards of a gentleman, who had brought them up in his own house as sisters. They became brides on the same day ; Margaret marrying Mr. Nevinson, a chancery barrister in good practice, and Eleanor giving her hand to Lieutenant Rivers, of the East India Company Service. Both were made widows a few years afterwards, and each with an only child. Thus far the same thread had run through the destinies of both, but here it stopped. The relict of the prosperous lawyer found herself and her boy amply provided for ; but Eleanor, not only lost her husband, who was killed in a skirmish with the Mahrattas, but every shilling of the income she had possessed. At the time of her bereavement she was slowly recovering from

her fifth confinement, when the tidings came on her with the shock of a thunderbolt. Her infant, weak and ailing like all its predecessors, none of whom had lived, seemed likely soon to follow its father. The young widow had no heart to rally under her trials. She died within a few days of the arrival of the fatal news. But, contrary to expectation, the baby lived and thrived under the care of its Hindoo nurse. Application was made on its behalf to Mrs. Nevinson, causing that worthy lady much perplexity. But the world would cry shame upon her—even upon *her*, its favourite—if she entirely repudiated the claim : and that would be still worse than to have to pay for the maintenance and education of the luckless orphan ; so, after a few hours of deliberation she resolved to receive it. After all, it would be no great expense or trouble for some years to come at least. Her present nurse could take care of two children, almost as easily as of one, and many of William's cast-off clothes would be available for the new-comer ; and there *was* a pension, though a small one, which would at least pay for the child's keep.



Accordingly, by return of post, there arrived a letter at Agra, which excited the deepest admiration in the bosom of those to whom it was addressed. Mrs. Nevinson expressed her deep sorrow at the untimely fate of the sister of her adoption, and her thankfulness at being permitted the privilege of receiving Eleanor's orphan child as her own. She begged that the latter might be sent to England on the earliest opportunity ; and stated that from the moment of the child's arrival at Brathay Hermitage, she would take all the expenses attending its nurture on herself—thus gracefully evading the cost of its passage home. Eleanor accordingly was conveyed to England by a charitable lady, and deposited at Mrs. Nevinson's house, where she soon became accustomed to her new home and playfellow.

As years went on, the good lady was visited occasionally by doubts as to the wisdom of the course she had taken. Her circumstances were no doubt good. Her son would inherit what most people would think a very handsome provision ; but among those people, Mrs. Nevinson was not to be numbered. She had early set her heart on his marrying

Fanny Luttrell, Mr. Dennis's stepdaughter, and, as was generally thought, his heiress. The childish fondness which William had shown for his tiny playfellow, Eleanor, even at an age when boy's affections usually find no other vent than bull's eyes and birds' nests, had sometimes made her uneasy. Had the likelihood of an attachment springing up between her son and the little penniless orphan ever seriously suggested itself to her, it is to be feared that Eleanor would have been left to take her chance of living or dying in India, let the world say what it might. But she comforted herself with the reflection that, as a matter of experience, little lovers very seldom care for one another when they grow up ; nor did Eleanor's early girlhood give promise of any very perilous beauty.

But for all that, Mrs. Nevinson took the precaution of keeping the children, when they grew older, as much separate as possible. Before Eleanor was twelve, she was sent to an establishment for young ladies at Edinburgh ; and her holidays were so arranged, that, except for a week at Christmas, she and William never met. When William left

Westminster, and went into residence at Oxford, this entire estrangement could not be kept up without the likelihood of exciting suspicion ; the very last thing Mrs. Nevinson would have desired. Still, she continued, with consummate skill, to prevent all meetings at which mischief might be done.

One summer there was a pressing invitation for Eleanor to pass her Whitsuntide holidays with General Rashleigh, an old comrade of her father's in India ; "and, under the circumstances, you know, it was impossible for the girl to refuse it, sorry as she was to miss William." In the following year, Mr. Dennis made a point of William's accompanying Fanny and himself on a tour to the Scotch lakes ; which began before the commencement of Eleanor's holidays, and lasted a fortnight after they were ended. And now on the third recurrence of the dreaded season, she had despatched her son to visit France and Switzerland ; it having been arranged that he was to take up his residence at his uncle's house in Worfield, immediately after his return. "Such an opportunity, you know, was not to be missed," as Mrs. Nevinson ex-

plained it to Mrs. Walsh, "and though it was William's last summer at home, I could not be so selfish as to ask him to give it up."

"After all," thought the good lady, as she contemplated Eleanor's unlucky toilet on the day of the garden party, "there can't be much ground for alarm; William is not likely to fancy a lanky, ill-dressed thing like that. It is a pity he can't see her. I should think that that bonnet and skirt would be enough to disenchant any man. My dear Eleanor," she said aloud, "what a charming bouquet you have there. Surely our conservatory never could have furnished it."

"No, aunt, it was sent me this morning from Keswick. A man from Noon's left it here, and said it had been ordered some time ago for to-day."

"From Noon's? Yes, I think I remember seeing those Cape jessamines there, when I called about a fortnight ago. Well, really, Eleanor, this is interesting. You must have some devoted admirer in Keswick. Mr. Charles McDermott, perhaps; or the new curate, Mr. Payne; or, who knows, Mr.

John Walsh. They are all coming here to-day."

"Oh, not Mr. John Walsh!" exclaimed Eleanor, hastily. "I am sure it does not come from him, and if I thought it did"—she paused and coloured at her own impetuosity.

"What then, my dear?" asked Mrs. Nevinson, curiously.

"I don't know. Only I hope—I am sure—he is not the sender."

"You don't like Mr. John Walsh, eh? Well, I don't know why you should not. His family are very good, and he himself is clever, and good looking after a fashion, and amusing too. Don't you think so?"

"His family are very nice, but I don't like him. I can't say I think him at all amusing. He simply sneers at everyone whom he ventures to attack."

"Ah, I see, you can't forgive him for what he said about your paladin, Mr. Frank Lawrence, the other night! Well, perhaps he was rather hard on him. But really, Mr. Frank's sudden *penchant* for study requires a good deal of faith on the part of his friends,

if they are to believe in it. You know William himself seemed a good deal surprised at it."

"Yes, aunt, but he spoke in quite a different way. If Mr. John Walsh would speak out, I should not care so much what he said: but he always gives one the idea, or tries to give it, that he knows something very bad about people, though he doesn't choose to tell it. I wish Mr. Lawrence were here to give him a thorough good setting down."

Her companion looked at her with some surprise. "Why, Eleanor," she said, "I had no idea you were so much interested about him. Well, anyhow, he is not much to be pitied. If he inherits Derwent Court—as after all, I suppose he will—there will be plenty of people to stand up for him. Probably Mr. John Walsh among the foremost."

"Why do you say, after all?" asked Eleanor. "There is no other relative, is there, to whom Sir James could leave it?"

"I believe he has no other near relative," said Mrs. Nevinson. "But people do not always leave their property to their relatives. And the General is just the man to leave his

to some person of whom no one had heard before, if he thought he had sufficient reason. He might take offence with Mr. Frank, as he did with his father. He would never see him or his widow—not even in her last illness. And it was years before he would acknowledge Frank himself.”

“What had his son done to offend him?” asked Eleanor.

“Two things, which were grievous offences in the General’s eyes at all events. In the first place, he had refused to marry a lady whom Sir James wanted him to marry; and in the second place, he *did* marry a lady whom Sir James wanted him *not* to marry.”

“Oh, aunt, was that all?”

“All, and enough too, Eleanor; as you will find out when you ‘know more of the world.”

“And do you mean that he never saw his son again?”

“Well, he never had the opportunity. His son had the command of the coastguard station at Whitehaven. It was that, I fancy, which had enabled him to marry. But soon after his marriage he was killed in an en-

counter with some smugglers. People thought that the General would have given way when he heard of it; but he didn't. He took no notice of the widow, or of her son either for many years."

"What induced him to do it then?" inquired Miss Rivers.

"Well, his eldest son, who was an officer in India, died unmarried. So the General was left without any heir, except this boy. He then sent for him, and charged himself with his education and prospects. I have heard that of late years he has become more attached to his grandson; but even now, if he were to give the old man any offence, he would have but small chance of ever being the owner of Derwent Court."

"The horrid old wretch!" exclaimed Eleanor. "I had no idea that anyone out of a novel, ever was so hard and cruel. Aunt, I am quite sorry that he is coming here to-day. I wonder everyone does not avoid his company, that I do!"

Mrs. Nevinson smiled at her adopted niece's vehemence. "I never saw you so excited about anything before, Eleanor.



But seventy and seventeen view these things differently—not by the by, that he is quite seventy yet, any more than you are seventeen. I daresay General Lawrence considers himself to be the injured party, and would be very much surprised to hear that there could be two opinions on the subject. But I hear carriage wheels, if I am not mistaken. Yes, I am right, there is the General's livery. Mind, my dear, you must receive him properly, and answer him nicely, if he notices you. It does not signify what you say to me, as long as it goes no further. But you must not show any coldness to him. That would never do. Now run across and tell the band to strike up. Sir James is just alighting at the door."

She had scarcely finished speaking, when a tall gentleman, whose erect carriage, notwithstanding his advanced years, bore evident trace of the soldier, advanced slowly from the gate to greet her. Miss Rivers looked at him with a mixture of interest and dislike. His features still retained the remains of the personal beauty, for which he had been remarkable in his youth; when he had been declared, by his brother officers, to be the

poorest, proudest, and prettiest man in the Allied Army. At the first glance, he appeared a very old man, probably beyond eighty ; but a closer scrutiny would have induced the spectator to doubt whether the emaciation of his frame, and the pallor of his hollow cheek were not due rather to disease, than to old age. Eleanor fancied she could read in his eye and lip, and in the wrinkles of his forehead, at once the stern determination which had induced him to cast off those whom he most dearly loved, and the secret remorse which his own severity had awakened. She was rather glad that beyond a polite shake of the hand, he bestowed no notice on her, addressing his conversation wholly to her aunt.

But her attention was soon diverted into a different channels. The other guests, following in the wake of the General, began to throng in thick and fast. The whole lawn was soon gay with every colour of the rainbow ; the air was filled with the buzz of conversation, as the various groups devoted themselves to the pursuits of gossip and flirtation ; which, relieved by music, ices, and champagne, constitute what may be called the main business of a *fête champêtre*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

EVENING was drawing on. The remains of the cold collation wherewith Mrs. Nevins's guests had been regaled, were in the course of being removed, in order that the barn, in which it had been spread, might be cleared for dancing.

The company were gathered outside in many a merry group. Engagements for waltzes, quadrilles and polkas were being made and duly recorded in the cards provided for the benefit of the shorter memories (as it would seem to be the case) of the belles of the present generation. Gentlemen were drawing on their white gloves; chaperons looking grim, or gracious, as the exigences of the case might require; and the musicians,

who had taken their station in a marquee pitched in the opening made by the great folding doors of the barn, were tuning and scraping, preparatory to dashing off into the everlasting Post Horn galop, wherewith the ball was to open.

Two gentlemen were seated at a little distance from the general throng, near the entrance of the grounds, and concealed from sight by a cluster of shrubs. One of them was our old acquaintance, Jack Walsh. He was leaning back, apparently in a state of indolent enjoyment, too lazy to talk to his companion, a young man of the same age as himself. The latter looked as though he had little fancy for his present position, but was detained by his friend, or, at least, had some reason for wishing to remain with him. He cast one or two wistful glances towards him ; but finding that he paid no heed, at last broke the silence.

“ You really must let me return to the matter I was speaking to you about before dinner. It is a serious business, so far as I am concerned.”

“ Well, Joe,” returned Walsh lazily, “ and

if it is, that is the very reason why we ought not to discuss it now. One drops business, usually, does one not at a party of pleasure?"

"Yes, if one is not obliged to keep it in hand. But you know the bill becomes due on Friday week, and this is Wednesday. You promised me that you would pay it when it became due, and now you tell me—"

"I only said I would do so, if I made a good thing of Goodwood. But you know what an infernal piece of ill luck that was. Instead of turning an honest penny, as I had felt sure of doing, I was rather dipped myself, though not for very much. If a man is in a condition, Joe, that's one thing; but if he's not, that's another."

"Well, any how, what's to be done? You spoke of Frank Lawrence giving his name to renew—can you manage that?"

"Why, I reckoned on his being at Derwent Court this summer, in which case there would have been no difficulty in getting it done. But he's taken it into his head to stew up in Oxford all this Long. So, of course, there is no getting at him."

"No doubt," replied his companion some-

what sharply, "but that will not enable us to meet this bill."

"Us?" inquired Walsh with some emphasis, and a quick easy smile.

"Yes, us!" exclaimed Verrall with some heat. "It may be true that my name alone occurs in it, but you know it was really yours, as much as mine. You persuaded me to—"

"My good fellow," interposed Walsh with much coolness, "you ascribe to me a good deal more knowledge than I possess, and which my modesty altogether disclaims. And as for persuading you, perhaps you may remember the sort of persuasion I employed. I persuaded you, if my memory serves me right, not to ruin your character, lose your situation, and go to jail; which you would have done if you had not paid heed to my advice."

"I know that," sullenly rejoined Verrall. "I know you had involved me in these cursed debts, and would not help me out, unless I consented to sign my hand to the bill. I know that well enough."

"I involved you, Joseph! You are ungrateful, my friend. I think you had better

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"Why, I reckoned on his being at Derwent Court this summer, in which case there would have been no difficulty in getting it done. But he's taken it into his head to stew up in Oxford all this Long. So, of course, there is no getting at him."

"No doubt," replied his companion some-

what sharply, "but that will not enable us to meet this bill."

"Us?" inquired Walsh with some emphasis, and a quick easy smile.

"Yes, us!" exclaimed Verrall with some heat. "It may be true that my name alone occurs in it, but you know it was really yours, as much as mine. You persuaded me to—"

"My good fellow," interposed Walsh with much coolness, "you ascribe to me a good deal more knowledge than I possess, and which my modesty altogether disclaims. And as for persuading you, perhaps you may remember the sort of persuasion I employed. I persuaded you, if my memory serves me right, not to ruin your character, lose your situation, and go to jail; which you would have done if you had not paid heed to my advice."

"I know that," sullenly rejoined Verrall. "I know you had involved me in these cursed debts, and would not help me out, unless I consented to sign my hand to the bill. I know that well enough."

"I involved you, Joseph! You are ungrateful, my friend. I think you had better



refresh your memory as to these same cursed debts, as you very properly term them. If you chose to go rather too fast, that was your affair. It wasn't my business, I suppose, to stop you. How should I know how the supplies held out. I didn't keep the privy purse, did I? But don't think," he resumed, a minute or two afterwards, seeing his words had produced the desired effect, "that I refuse to help. I've been unlucky at Goodwood; but it's not in possibility but what I must win on the Leger, so it's only for a few weeks, and surely you can manage that. Haven't you any relation or friend, that would lend you his name for that time?"

"I am afraid not," replied Verrall. "I wrote to my brother-in-law on Monday, and asked him. He may do it; but it's not likely. He's a parson—a married man with a lot of children, and not very well off himself; but it's possible, of course."

"When do you expect his answer?" asked Walsh.

"By the afternoon's post; I expect to find a letter from him, when I go home this evening."

"This afternoon's post," said Walsh, consulting his watch. "It will be in in a quarter of an hour. Suppose we stroll into Keswick away from this party by way of a change, Joe, and see the mail come in. We shall get back in plenty of time, and as fresh as larks, to have the cream of the dancing, if there be any."

"I have no objection," replied his companion, who was in fact too nervous about his pecuniary difficulties to think of anything else, and who reflected that by complying, he would get earlier possession of his letter.

They sauntered along for some time in silence. At last Walsh observed, "I never told you, Joe, that I called at that ladies school when I was in London, as I said I thought of doing."

"Did you?" said Verrall, affecting an interest, if he did not feel it, in his companion's scheme. "I was afraid you would have been baulked by not having the letters to deliver. You know I found they had been sent the day before your letter reached me."

"Yes; but I was not to be done notwith-

standing. I called and told the old girl that I had not been sure of visiting London, and, therefore, the remittance had been sent by post; but I was returning shortly, and if she or Miss Hicks had any message, I should have much pleasure in conveying it. I wish you had seen Miss Harriet, when she came into the room. It would have made her fortune at the Olympic. Demure as a quakeress while the old one was looking on, but with a sly look at the corner of her eye, that was worth anything. I would give fifty pound down (that by-the-by, would pay the bill, Joe), to know whether the General did increase her legacy last October."

"I am sure I wish I could find out," replied Verrall, "you know I did try my best, but Masters is as close as a cash box. He would not take my hint at all for a long time, and then he said I must know such matters were always kept secret."

"Could not you make him drunk?" suggested Walsh coolly.

"Masters drunk! he's a teetotaller, never takes anything stronger than tea, or ginger beer at the most."

"That's unlucky," said Jack, "I should like

you to have got the fifty pound reward, Joe. I wonder," he continued in the same tone, "where the General's will is kept?"

Verrall's face grew red. "Confound you," he exclaimed angrily, "what are you up to now? do you wish to make a felon of me, and have me transported for life?"

"I am indifferent on the subject, Joseph," replied Walsh, with the same coolness; "but I am not aware that I suggested anything that could lead to the outburst with which you have favoured me. I simply expressed a curiosity to know where the General's will was kept. That, I apprehend, is scarcely felonious. At all events, it cannot make you so. But here we are entering the town, and see, there is the mail coming over the bridge. We have timed it to a minute, have we not?"

Joe Verrall was silent. He had seen plainly enough his companion's meaning, and knew that it was in his power to procure the desired information in the way suggested. The iron safe, in which General Lawrence's papers were contained, was secured by a padlock, which one of his private keys would open. He had acci-

dently discovered this fact a few weeks previously, when he had been desired by Mr. Walsh to deposit some papers in it. He had found that the key handed to him for the moment, exactly corresponded with one attached to his own ring. Though he had at first indignantly resented the suggestion of his more unscrupulous acquaintance, he could not dismiss the thought of how easy it would be to obtain the information, for which he might receive a sum that would at once free him from all his difficulties. Walsh, he was sure, had no suspicion of the ease with which it might be obtained, or he would never have offered such a sum as fifty pounds for it, and he rather enjoyed the idea of outwitting him, if he should be disposed after all to accede to his suggestion.

Meanwhile his companion hurrying on before him, had reached the inn door, in front of which the coach had drawn up, and was about to exchange salutations with his friend the guard, when he was hailed by a well known voice from the box-seat. Looking up, he discerned Hillier and Lawford. Too lazy to descend from their eminence, they

were taking advantage of the halt to procure fresh lights for their cigars from the Boots; whom they rewarded with the reversion of the tankard of ale, after its virgin freshness had been sipped by themselves. There was a mutual shout of recognition, and rapid enquiries interchanged. "We are steering northwards," said Hillier, "Lawford here, has a friend who has rented a room, in some place in the Highlands, with an awful name to pronounce; and like a judicious man he wants some friends to take part in the sport. Lawford with equal judgment has recommended me, as being at once a crack shot, and a charming companion; haven't you now, Lawford?" he continued, turning to his fellow passenger.

"That's your version of it, is it?" replied Lawford, in the interval of a series of attempts to light a particularly obstinate cigar—puff, puff—"that's your version of it, well, I think"—puff, puff—"it would be more decent to say that I took compassion on your loneliness"—puff. "You see, Jack, I found this fellow—plague take this cigar—You see, I found him all but dead with dullness in his

rooms at Oxford"—puff, puff, puff; "that's better!—mooning over 'Æschylus' and 'Butler's Analogy,' and taking constitutionals round the Christchurch walk, like a freshman in his first term. Well, I thought Highland air would blow him out again"—puff, puff—"like putting gas into a balloon, as Sam Weller says, and so I offered him a fortnight's shooting on Warburton's moor; and he jumped at it like a trout at a May fly, and now he talks"—

"Oxford," interrupted Walsh, "did you say Oxford?"

"Aye, to be sure, Oxford," rejoined Lawford, "you have heard of such a place, I suppose?"

"You have been there since the beginning of the Long, Hillier? I did not know that. Have you seen much of Lawrence?" The two friends looked at one another and then laughed. "Oh, no," said Hillier, "I have seen very little of him. He has been better employed, than to be much in my company."

"What, he really has taken to reading then? well, one never can say what will come to any man; but I would have laid the

longest odds I ever gave, against that ever coming to pass. Do you really mean he stews over his books for four or five hours a day, Hillier?"

"I assure you, his assiduity has been most remarkable," replied Hillier, solemnly.

"And has already been crowned with success, or I am much surprised," added Lawford.

"Do not be hard on him," pursued Hillier, in the same strain, "no one ever had a *fairer* justification for his exertions, eh, Lawford?"

"No, indeed, his work may well be called a labour of love, if any man's ever was," responded Lawford with a laugh, in which both joined.

Walsh glanced from one face to the other, with a half-conscious, half-puzzled look.

"What the deuce are you fellows up to?" he said at last, "what has Frank been at? He hasn't been making up to an heiress, I suppose?"

"Heiress, what in Oxford! No; I should think not. Such articles don't grow there, my boy, as the bushman said of the parsons. If he is making up to any lady, anyhow she is not an heiress."



"Phew!" exclaimed Jack, with a long whistle, "is that it? Well, by Jove, I have thought it once or twice, but that's not at all like Frank, either. And I was with him constantly all last term too, and he could hardly have been up to that sort of thing, without my finding it out; and yet, if it is so, that must have been his reason for stopping up. Are you quite sure, Hillier? I think it hardly can be."

"Come up here, Jack, and we'll tell you what we know about it, if you will promise to keep it secret," said Lawford; "but you must make haste, for the mail will be starting again in a minute or two. Ho, by jingo, here comes coachee. We shan't have time."

"I can go with you for a mile or so," said Walsh, "if there's room. You can drop me at Mrs. Nevinson's lodge. Joe," he pursued, addressing Verrall, "get any letters there are for me, or my father, or Mrs. Nevinson, or the General. As we are going back to join them, we may as well save old Hawkins a walk. I'll wait for you at the Lodge corner," he shouted, as the coach drove off. "Well, now you two fellows cut away with your story, and lose no time."

A quarter of an hour afterwards, Walsh was pacing up and down the road near Mrs. Nevinson's gate, awaiting the arrival of Verrall. He had affected to laugh incredulously at the tale which his friends had told him; but his demeanour, now that he was left to himself, did not tally with that view of the matter.

"They are wrong about it, those fellows," he muttered, as he walked slowly towards Verrall, whose figure was now visible in the distance, "they are wrong about Frank's intentions that is, though it is more than likely they are right about his being spooney on the girl. I recollect seeing her myself one day, and she was a proper stunner—just the article to take Frank Lawrence's fancy, or John Walsh's either, for the matter of that. It's five to one that is what has kept him up at Oxford. If so, he'll be trying, sure as a gun, to come round the General; and, sure as a gun, the General won't have it. There'll be a row between the two; and old Lawrence never forgives. And then H. H. may, as likely as not, cut in. I say, I really must look to this. If I

were only sure what the General had done for her, I would risk it even now—I declare I would. But then—confound that fellow Verrall, he must find it out, and he shall! I have got him in a cleft stick, and I'll keep him there, and squeeze him pretty tight too, if he doesn't! He has scruples, has he? What business has a fellow like that with them, just when it suits him, but never when it does not? And what harm would it do any one? If the girl is to have the old man's money, she must marry some one, and why not me? If Joe were sure of that, I guess we should have no more of his scruples. Here he comes, rot him, as sulky as a badger, and trying to look, as if he wasn't. Guess his brother-in-law hasn't agreed to back the bill. Well, Joe," he said aloud, as that worthy drew nigh, "any letters? I hope you have heard, as you expected, from your friend about the bill."

"There is no letter for any one here," replied Verrall, "excepting one for General Lawrence. I told the postman he was at Brathay Hermitage; and he was glad enough to be saved a long walk. This is from

Frank Lawrence, I expect. I think it is his hand, and the post-mark is Oxford."

"Very likely," said Walsh with assumed indifference, glancing at the letter, and seeing, in a moment, that his comrade's conjecture was correct. "You had better give it to the General at once. There he sits, if I mistake not," for they had, by this time, entered the grounds, and had attained a full view of the company clustered round the door of the dancing booth, or grouped in parties over the lawn. "There he sits in the summer-house, where the band was playing this morning, and those people with whom he has been talking are just leaving him. Now's your time, you could not have a better opportunity."

Thus admonished, Verrall piloted his way through the various groups that interposed between him and the summer-house, and briefly accosting General Lawrence, delivered the letter. Jack advanced nearer, under the shelter of a laurel hedge, to observe the result.

The General's face, as he opened the letter, expressed nothing more than ordinary inte-

rest; but a look of surprise and doubt crept over it, which increased, as it seemed, with every sentence; on coming to the end he sat silent for a few minutes. Then again taking up the letter, he gave it a second and more attentive perusal. This did not seem more satisfactory than the first. Glancing round him, he observed young Verrall, who had moved away only a few steps, and was standing with his back towards him watching the dancers. He called to him, and charged him with a message to Mr. Walsh, desiring the attendance of the latter at eleven o'clock on the following morning on business. Then making his way through the crowd, he took a hasty farewell of his hostess, stepped into his carriage, and was driven home.

"He has written about her," thought Walsh, "and the old General is properly savage. He has sent for the governor too. That looks like business. Well, we shall see—we shall see!"

## CHAPTER IX.

GENERAL LAWRENCE was seated alone in his library—a spacious Elizabethan apartment, with a deep embayed window ; through which might be seen a long slope of lawn descending to the water's edge, and terminating in the rich landscape of the lake, and its surrounding mountains. He looked older and feebler than he had appeared on the preceding evening. His nervous irritability showed itself in repeated changes of posture, and dissatisfied murmurs, as he turned over some papers which lay before him. From time to time he would glance impatiently at the clock, which showed that the hour appointed for Mr. Walsh's visit was already past. Once or twice he rang the bell

to inquire whether any message had been received from that gentleman.

"No message, Sir James," was the butler's reply to the third of these inquiries, "but Jenkins says that he saw Mr. Walsh's gig standing at Mrs. Nevinson's door, as he rode by a quarter of an hour ago. Mr. Walsh's groom told him that his master had been asked to step in for a few moments to speak to Mrs. Nevinson. Perhaps, as it is raining heavily, he may have waited at the Hermitage, till the shower was over."

The General walked to the window. "The weather does not seem likely to improve Willet," he said. "If Mr. Walsh does not come shortly, let Robins get out the close carriage, and drive to Mrs. Nevinson's to bring him."

Willet left the room, and the General, leaning back in his chair, again took up the letter which Verrall had delivered to him on the previous evening. He broke out into an angry exclamation, as he glanced through it. "Weak, foolish boy," he said. "He is just his father over again. Not one whit wiser, or more thoughtful! Warning and example

are alike thrown away upon him. I wonder who has taken his fancy now? Some third-rate niece of a rusty professor, I suppose! Or, no, by-the-bye, they are all away at this time of the year—some actress at the provincial theatre then, or the daughter of his washerwoman! Does he know, I wonder, that I never saw his father's face after the day of that miserable marriage? Or does he think I am likely to be less resolute with my grandson, than I was with my son. Poor Francis," he added, after a moment's pause, with inexpressible softening of his voice. "I said rightly, it was a miserable marriage, but it was bitterly atoned for; and who but this lad is now left to bear the old name, and live in the old house, when I am gone?"

He paused, and his eye fell on a packet of letters, which were evidently of a much older date; the blue ribbon with which they were tied, having quite lost its colour. He took them up, and opened the first which came to hand; but almost instantly laid it down again. It did not appear to suggest pleasant thoughts. "Eight and forty years ago," he muttered, "eight and forty years this spring!



How can I be such a boy as to remember it thus! And she was right. Harriet was right after all. A penniless ensign, with no prospect of advancement or fortune—how could I expect a girl to favour such a suitor? And yet she would fain persuade me that she did, and that her father's commands alone prevented our union." He took up another letter, as he pondered thus, and turned it sadly over. "Yes, the words seemed to come from her grave, and I have never doubted their truth. I have nothing to charge upon her."

"But her daughter, that second Harriet, who was to have been my daughter too—who could forgive that deceit and treachery? It was the bitterest disappointment of the two. Well, I have resolved that her child, my Harriet's grandchild, shall not be left to utter want. But have I not had enough of trusting to that race? Mother and daughter—they caused me in youth and middle age the two keenest sorrows of my life! Am I to bring upon myself in my old age, a third disappointment at the hands of the grandchild?"

“ Yet I have thought,” he added, a minute or two afterwards, “ I have thought, dreamer, as I am, that even now my first early hope might be in some degree fulfilled, if Harriet’s granddaughter were to become mine too. And, for Frank—surely such a marriage would be better for him, than to let him throw himself away on the first pretty face that may chance to take his fancy. What is this third Harriet like, I wonder—I don’t mean in face—they tell me that in that she is the very image of her mother and grandmother at the same age; but her mind, her character?”

He chose another letter from the bundle, and read a few sentences aloud. “ ‘ Handsome, ladylike, accomplished, fitted to fill a high station and adorn it’—psha! The genuine schoolmistress’s puff of her pupil!—‘ is gifted with great self-possession, circumspection, and *savoir faire*.’ Well, I should like to see and judge for myself. She may really be what she is described. She is at least a lady, and if Frank ”—He relapsed again into silence, which this time was not

broken until Willet, throwing open the door, announced Mr. Walsh.

General Lawrence thrust the letters which he had been perusing into a drawer, and then rose to receive an elderly gentleman, with a bald head, and a slight limp, who hurried after the servant into the room, uttering voluble apologies as he advanced.

Mr. Walsh was a good man of business, strictly honourable in his profession, and much esteemed in his neighbourhood. But his manner and address were peculiar, and afforded his acquaintance continual amusement. It had early been impressed upon him, that suavity, and cheerfulness of manner would be of great service to him with his clients; and he had learned the lesson so thoroughly, that he never (except indeed in the privacy of his own family) was known to make an observation in any other manner, even when the subject on which he spoke was of the most painful or melancholy character. There was a story commonly circulated about him, that he replied to an acquaintance who asked him after his father's health, which had long been failing—"My father,

---

Sir, thank you, Sir, for asking. He died last Tuesday, Sir, and we are going, with your kind favour, to bury him to-day, Sir." And those who knew him best, were half inclined to doubt whether the story was a caricature, or a veritable fact. On the present occasion he was as full of urbanity as usual.

"Good morning to you, General," he said blandly. "It's a miserable day, Sir—north-wind, Sir, and drenching rain—I don't think there's the least chance of its holding up all day. How is your rheumatism, General; bad, is it? ah, indeed," in a particularly cheerful tone—"It *is* rheumatic weather. You must expect it, Sir; but you will be better, Sir, when the weather changes. I ask your pardon, General, for being so late. I know I have caused you a great deal of inconvenience; but Mrs. Nevinson detained me, Sir. She wants a passport for her son to enable him to pass the Austrian frontiers; and the one he obtained in London is found to be of no service, and his remittances have not reached him. I urged her, in the first instance, to take a Foreign Office passport, and a circular letter of credit for Mr. William;

but she would not. Between ourselves, Sir, Mrs. Nevinson is 'a little'—here Mr. Walsh's voice became quite melodious in its blandness—"a *little* obstinate. 'My dear Madam,' I said to her, 'you have arranged matters well; but if you had arranged them in any other *possible* manner, Madam, Mr. William could not have suffered the inconveniences to which he has been subject.' Thank you, General,"—in reply to an offer of refreshment—"thank you, I *will* take a glass of warm sherry and water, for I am a little afraid of the damp, Sir."

The General made no attempt to stem the torrent, until he saw Mr. Walsh comfortably seated, and the refreshment disposed of. Then he began—

"I think the half-year's accounts have not been settled, Mr. Walsh; and there are one or two matters—Dr. McDermott's lease, and the drainage of the Borrowdale farm, which I am anxious to have arranged. At my age and with my health, I must transact business when I am able."

"Most desirable to go into them at once, Sir James, not but what your health will improve—beyond any doubt it will improve,

Sir—but there is no time for business like the present.”

“You have got the half-year’s accounts with you?”

“They are in the bag, Sir James. Will you go into the matter of the lease first?”

Half-an-hour passed, during which the old man appeared to have given his attention wholly to the business on which he was engaged; nor would a third person have guessed that he had any other motive in desiring Mr. Walsh’s presence. His shrewd visitor, however, knew perfectly that the real business of the day had not yet been broached, though he allowed no hint of his conviction to escape him. At length the business appeared to be despatched. “Is there anything more, Mr. Walsh?”

“Nothing, Sir, I believe. Oh yes, there are the half-yearly bills for Miss Hicks’s board and education.”

“Miss Hicks? true, we have not gone through them. By-the-bye, Mr. Walsh, how long has Miss Hicks been at Miss Gurnett’s Academy?”

“Nearly three years, Sir James; she went there, you will remember, when she was six-

teen, at the time of her removal from Como. You meant, I think, to keep her at Miss Gurnett's, till she had finished her education?"

"When she was sixteen; and she has been there three years, you say? Then it must be time for her to leave school?"

"I should think it was, Sir James. Indeed, Miss Gurnett had notice that she was not to expect her to remain more than three years; though, of course, it is open to you to send her for another year, or half-year, if you should choose."

"I do not think that would be desirable. She ought certainly to be removed; but where to? I ought to have thought of this before. It was resolved, I think, that she should take a situation as a governess, when her education was complete?"

"Just so, Sir James, and I am told that owing to your judicious kindness, she is highly qualified for a governess's place. Miss Gurnett informs me that Miss Hicks is considered the best linguist and musician in her school, and her general knowledge is quite remarkable. With your kind recommendation, Sir, she would have no difficulty—

no difficulty at all, Sir, in obtaining a first-rate situation."

"That is well; but probably some time will elapse before a suitable opening presents itself. I am afraid she has no friends who could receive her for awhile."

"If you would like it, Sir James, Mrs. Walsh and myself would be delighted—delighted, I am sure, Sir—to invite her to Keswick, until she could hear of something to suit her."

The General bowed. "You are most obliging, Mr. Walsh; but are you sure it will be no inconvenience? Is not your house full? Your son, I think—the undergraduate—is he not at home this summer?"

"It will not be the least inconvenience, Sir James—quite the contrary, I assure you. We shall be delighted—Mrs. Walsh and myself will be delighted. My daughter is going away for a visit of some length, and there is her room for Miss Hicks. Pray permit me the pleasure of writing to her—it really *will* be a pleasure."

"You are extremely kind. If you really think it would cause no inconvenience—" said the General.



"Not in the least," interpolated Mr. Walsh.

"—That would be the most satisfactory arrangement. She has no idea, I think you told me, Mr. Walsh, that there is anyone in this neighbourhood, who has had anything to do with providing for the cost of her education, or takes a special interest in her?"

"She has not the least idea," returned Mr. Walsh. "Miss Gurnett told me the last time I saw her, that Miss Hicks was entirely ignorant who her benefactor was. She has been trying to find out whether Miss Gurnett knew more than herself on the subject; but that, Sir, as you know, she did not."

"That again is well," said the General, "and if Mrs. Walsh would indeed kindly receive her, it would be a great convenience."

"But stay," added the General, a moment afterwards, "there is your son. He will be at home, will he not, for two months to come."

"I suppose so," said Mr. Walsh. "I know of no engagement that is likely to take him away."

"Ah, just so. Might there not be a risk,

Mr. Walsh? Remember she is penniless—that is to say, wholly penniless now, and perhaps eventually also. She is, it appears, handsome, agreeable, and accomplished. Might not your son entangle himself in an attachment, which would be every way unfortunate? I should be truly sorry that your kind willingness to oblige me should involve you in difficulty of any kind.”

“Thank you, Sir James, you are most considerate. I don’t think there can be any danger of the kind,” replied the attorney. “John is a long headed fellow, and as unlikely as anyone I know to fall in love with a lady, however charming, who has no fortune.”

“Perhaps he may not know that she has no fortune,” observed Sir James. “Young men seldom think much on that subject.”

“True, Sir James. He has never heard anything about her yet; but I will caution him, Sir. I will caution him. There is nothing like caution, Sir, for young people, or for old either.”

He rose to take his leave, but the old man detained him.

“I forgot to ask,” he said in a lower tone,

“whether you have ever obtained any clue to the matter, respecting which you spoke to me last winter.”

“About the letter professing to be from poor Worthington, Sir James? No, Sir, I have never been able to discover any thing. I wrote to the address indicated, and made personal inquiries there; but they knew nothing of such a person, nor could I discover that my letter had ever been received. I have also inserted repeated advertisements, the nature of which could not be mistaken by the writer of that letter; but I have never had an answer to any one of them.”

“And you believe then, that it was a hoax?”

“I can hardly do so, Sir James. The writer was certainly acquainted with facts, which I think no one else but Worthington could have known. Still it seems impossible he can be alive. I honour you for the steps you took, Sir James, in the matter. But I cannot think it possible that he is alive to avail himself of them.”

“How then do you account for the letter,

Mr. Walsh?" asked the General. "You say it was written by some one who was acquainted with facts known to no one but Worthington, and yet you think he was not the writer."

"I think some one must have got possession of papers which once belonged to him; and endeavoured to alarm us, in the hope of extorting money—that is the only conjecture I can form."

"That may be certainly; but we ought to bear in mind, that it was never proved that he was really drowned."

"It was proved that he fell overboard several miles from shore on a dark night, and all search for him was vain. The captain and all the crew were convinced of his death; and besides, Sir James, think how many years have elapsed since then. It is surely incredible he should have been silent all this time, if he was still alive. And if he is, and has kept silence all these years, why should he speak now?"

"True, there does seem no imaginable reason. I suppose we must presume the letter to have been an imposition."

Mr. Walsh again bowed, and this time made good his departure.

A few days afterwards, when a note of acceptance had arrived from Miss Hicks, in answer to Mr. Walsh's invitation, the worthy man took the opportunity of the after dinner *tête-à-tête* with his son, to introduce the subject.

"Did you not tell me you expected a visit from one of your Oxford friends, John?"

"I half expected Lawford, Sir," replied his son. "He had promised to pass a few days with us. But he has gone northward to the Moors, and I do not expect he will return, till the Long is over."

"Well that is fortunate. We could hardly have taken him in now, as it happens."

"Why not, Sir? Do you expect company?"

"Your mother has asked a lady to stay a week or two with us, until she can get a situation as governess to suit her."

Jack Walsh looked a little surprised; for, though Mrs. Walsh was no niggard, Quixotic acts of kindness to poor dependants were not her ordinary practice.

"A situation as a governess," he repeated hastily. "Is the lady any relation of ours?"

"None at all. She is an orphan, the protégée of an old friend; who is unable to receive her for a few weeks himself, and has prevailed on me to do so. I hear she is considered handsome and accomplished."

"Of course she is," observed Jack, "all orphans are lovely and interesting, and all governesses amiable and accomplished. I conclude she is also 'wholly destitute of provision,' as the canvassing cards for charitable asylums say?"

"You are right," replied Mr. Walsh, "she is wholly without any means of support, except what her own exertions may procure."

"And what may the lady's name be?" asked the young man carelessly, though a suspicion had occurred to him, which had greatly excited his interest.

"Hicks," replied his father. "Harriet Hicks, I am informed."

Young Walsh could not prevent a slight start as he heard the name. But a moment

admirer in the eyes of the world. He took care, however, to make her understand that the special interest he had always felt in her was in no way diminished; and hinted that nothing but the pressure of circumstances prevented him from shewing it more plainly.

"Fair and softly, and not too fast," had been his comment, after the interview with his father. "A little private flirtation will do no harm, but nothing to provoke suspicion. Wait and see how matters go between the General and Frank. Apparently the row has been quieted for the present; but give Frank plenty of rope, and he is tolerably safe to hang himself. I shall let the rope run out till nearly the end of the Long. Then I shall look up this girl of his, and find out how matters really stand between them. For the present, the word is 'fair and softly, and not too fast.'"

But we must now return to Lawrence, and explain the connection he has had with the last few chapters.

## CHAPTER X.

"So it is really finished at last?"

"Yes, I think so. Would you advise me to touch it any farther?"

"Let me look at it again more closely," and Lawrence, for he was the speaker, took the drawing from Miss Walton's hand, and scrutinised it carefully.

"No," he said, after a while, "I do not think you can improve it. For once in a way, even my fastidious fancy is satisfied. How much you have improved during the last two months."

"That is a covert compliment, I suppose, to your own ability as a connoisseur."

"No, indeed, I am not so conceited. Surely you must be aware yourself how much your foliage is improved. It used to be your least



successful point. Now it is almost equal to your rocks and water. And those clouds too—”

“Do you like them?” asked Teresa, eagerly. “I was in hopes you would, but was not sure.”

“Like them?” repeated her companion, with an expression of admiration, which seemed to be divided between the fair artist and the picture. “They are glorious. That warm red dying off into the yellow brown is exquisite. Teresa, you will be a great artist. I heard one of the most celebrated academicians of the day say that anyone who could succeed with clouds, must have the making of a great painter—a great landscape painter, that is, in him.”

“You are flattering me, Mr. Lawrence,” said Miss Walton, colouring slightly. “You know that is tabooed.”

“Indeed, I am not,” returned Frank, earnestly. “I think no one, unless he has real genius, can paint clouds. See how marvellously Nature, the greatest of all artists, uses them to vary and embellish her landscapes! How different, for instance, would this very scene, which now lies under that canopy of soft white wreaths

melting into misty blue—how different would it seem, if it were overhung by dark violet masses, on the point of bursting into thunder. She is continually varying their tints, and grouping them into new combinations, and whoever can follow and catch these must have that deep comprehension of her which makes the artist.”

“Yes, that is true,” said Miss Walton. “It is very much what my father used to say. I have seen him sit and watch the sky for hours together. He used to call a fine evening sky a new poem. I suppose that is what makes clouds so difficult to paint.”

“No doubt, but you are growing fast into knowledge of them. Your rocks and water, however, are still your best achievements; but that apparently is because you have had more practice in that line. You must have lived among crags and waves for a long time, I am certain, from the familiarity with which you handle them.”

Teresa smiled. “You are a good guesser, at all events,” she said. “I have passed nearly all my life by the sea, and on one of the rockiest coasts to be found in England.”

Lawrence looked at her earnestly. "Ah, Miss Walton," he said, "some day or other you must tell me all about yourself. If I had not been afraid that you would think me impertinent, I should have asked you about it long ago. It seems so strange to find you in—in your present position. I can scarcely help thinking you must feel it strange yourself."

"It is different, no doubt, Mr. Lawrence, in some respects, from what I have been used to," she replied, with an air of reserve. "There would be little, however, to interest you, or which would be worth your hearing. But it is time for me to be moving homewards"—and as if anxious to divert his attention from the topic he had raised, she began to busy herself in replacing the brushes and colours which she had been using, and securing the loose sheets in her portfolio. She then got up to depart.

"Must you really be going so early?" asked Lawrence.

"I must, indeed. There is not much fear of my being at home too early. What do you suppose the time to be?"

"Half-past three, at latest."

Teresa playfully held up her watch. It wanted but a few minutes of five!

"Your watch must be too fast, Miss Walton. It wanted a quarter to three when I came up, and it is impossible I can have been here two hours."

"Nevertheless, it is so, look at your own watch."

"Well, you are right, I declare," rejoined Frank, as he obeyed, "though I could not have supposed it possible. Well, if you must go—but stay, you have finished that sketch, what do you mean to begin upon next?"

"I have not thought about it," she replied. "To-morrow will be plenty of time."

"Oh, but wait. I want to tell you that in the course of my ride, one day last week, I came upon a most lovely glade opening down to the river. On the further bank, there is a most picturesque old ruin—the remains, I believe, of an old convent. There is Virginian creeper growing over the broken gable, just beginning to turn red; and in the background, a cluster of birches and sycamores, intermingled with half-a-dozen old yews,

making altogether the richest contrast of foliage I have ever seen. It would be a wonderful study of trees, and improved as you now are in leaf scenery, it would make a picture worthy to inaugurate your first appearance at the Water Colour Exhibition. Now do let me persuade you to undertake it. I can meet you here, and show you the way to-morrow."

"I cannot, to-morrow.

"Monday, then, or some day later in the week. Any day would suit me."

"I am afraid I cannot."

"Oh, why not? You have no other engagement? You are not going to leave the neighbourhood?" he added, anxiously.

"No, but—"

"But what? surely I cannot have been so unfortunate as to offend you."

"Oh, no. I owe you gratitude I can never repay—"

"Do not talk of gratitude. I would do anything for the privilege of serving you again."

"You are most kind," she resumed, her colour again deepening, "and it seems unthankful to say it." She again hesitated.

"Tell me everything, I implore you," exclaimed Frank.

"Well then, I will tell you. About three quarters of an hour, or perhaps an hour ago, you may perhaps remember that I dropped my brush into the grass, and you stooped to look for it. Just at that moment, I saw two gentlemen ride through the wood, about thirty yards off. They saw us, and stopped for a minute or two. They must have been friends of yours, for I saw one of them point you out to the other, as you handed me the brush ; and then they smiled, and exchanged a look of intelligence. I do not know why I should have felt so annoyed, but it seemed as though I had been detected in some offence. I could not bear that—that—that such a thing should happen again. Therefore—pray do not look so vexed, or I shall be sorry I told you—therefore I wished you to know my real reason for asking you to give up coming here, while I am drawing. And now," she added with a resolute effort, "I really must be gone." She shook hands with him more kindly than usual, and in another minute had vanished through the underwood.

Her reflections, as she made her way alone towards her aunt's cottage (for Lawrence made no effort to follow) her were of a kind she herself could hardly understand. She felt she had done right, and yet she was half sorry she had done it. But why was it right, and why need she be sorry? Mr. Lawrence was a friend, a very kind friend. He had rendered her a very great service at the risk of his life. He had given her most valuable help and advice. Why need she deprive herself of it? Ladylike feeling, and maidenly reserve alike had, in the first instance, induced her to repel the advances of a young man wholly unknown to her; and though she had learned from Mr. Wrightsen that Frank was a gentleman of birth and good character, there was still nothing to entitle him to her acquaintance. But his gallant rescue of her brother, and the delicacy, as well as kindness of heart, which he had shown upon that occasion, naturally interested her in his favour. When a few days after her release from her attendance on little Freddy, she had gone out to complete her unfinished sketch, and encountered Lawrence, who had "by mere chance, walked

out that way, to see the spot in which he was naturally so much interested ;" she could not do less than receive him cordially, and thank him more fully than she had hitherto been able to do, for his services.

A short interview had followed, Lawrence was too clever to make it a long one ; but long enough for her to find out that he understood more of the principles of art than she did, and could give her valuable advice. It happened that he would be riding that way to-morrow, and he would stop a moment and see how she had got on with the foliage of an oak, which had given her a great deal of trouble. The visits were repeated, on one ground or another, until it rarely happened that an afternoon passed, on which she did not exchange a few words of greeting with the Oxonian. As the summer advanced, the interviews began to extend themselves from a few passing words, to elaborate criticisms and discussions. Lawrence made the most of the knowledge he had picked up from the artists, whom he had often met at his grandfather's house, whilst they were engaged in sketching the scenery of the Lake country, or examining the



gallery at Derwent Court. Teresa began insensibly to reserve nice points for his decision, and delay any of the more important features of her composition, until she had obtained his advice. By the beginning of August matters had reached such a pass, that scarcely a day elapsed on which Lawrence did not reach the place at which she was sketching, within a quarter of an hour of her own arrival, and remain there until it was time for her to return home.

If Teresa had been differently brought up, such an intimacy as this would never have been permitted. It would have required but little knowledge of the world to foresee that it would inevitably result in a mutual attachment; the consequences of which would probably be disastrous to both parties, but certainly to Teresa. But Miss Walton had not even that little knowledge. If she thought—and the idea had lately been dawning upon her—that Mr. Lawrence had a warmer feeling for her than that of friendly interest, and that this feeling was deepening as their intercourse progressed, it sent the warm blood to her cheek, and a thrill of

strange satisfaction to her heart, but it caused her neither surprise nor distrust. Why should she be surprised? She was the daughter of an English gentleman, and a Spanish lady; both of them entitled to take their places in the highest family in England. She had no fortune, it was true, but she had been accustomed from her childhood to see money regarded as of but little account. And as for distrust, it was alien to her nature to distrust anyone, and Frank Lawrence was the last person in the world of whom she would have felt suspicion. He was too brave to be mean or treacherous; too high-minded to stoop to deceit; too kindhearted to hurt anyone, least of all her. And now the friendship between them would be broken off.

It was right, she again repeated to herself—she did not doubt that; but neither could she disguise from herself that the separation would be full of grief to her. The Youth and the Maiden had long passed the gates of the Enchanted Land, though at the time they knew it not. All other hopes and wishes had been lost in the one overmastering

passion, which was fast enthralling both. The spell of the great Magician was complete. It had needed but this last touch to reveal it to themselves.

Perhaps even this touch had hardly been required in the instance of Lawrence. He made no attempt, as the reader has already heard, to follow Miss Walton, but mounted his horse, and rode slowly back to Oxford. He was fully sensible that a crisis had come, and some decisive step must be taken. He had been thus far floating easily down the stream, content to glide on, without asking whither he was going. But a warning voice had now reached him, that there were rocks and cataracts ahead. He must either leap ashore, or prepare to encounter these dangers. In plain English, it would be impossible for him to continue his visits to Miss Walton on the same footing as heretofore—even if she would allow it, it could not be done. He had hitherto, as he at least believed, kept the secret of his solitary rides and rambles entirely to himself. So long as he could succeed in doing this, all was well. Now, however, it appeared that his secret had been discovered,

and he must either avow an engagement with Miss Walton, or render himself and her liable to the worst suspicions.

“Discovered, but by whom?” There was but one man of Mr. Peyton’s reading party, who was likely to have been in the neighbourhood of the spot where he had met Teresa. It was beyond the reach of a reading man’s walk: indeed Teresa had told him that the intruders were on horseback. Now the only undergraduate, then residing in Oxford, who at any time indulged in the luxury of a ride, was a man named Hillier; a hard-headed, clever, but decidedly racketty character, who had stayed up during the Long Vacation to make up for the idleness of the previous term, knowing that it was all important to his prospects in life to take high honours. Lawrence, who had found no difficulty in keeping the others at a distance, had felt that he could not shake off Hillier so easily. He belonged to the same set as himself in college; and though never a particular favourite of his, had been sufficiently intimate to make entire estrangement a marked thing. Frank was sensible of this, and for the first few weeks had rather sought his society. They

had ridden occasionally together—in a different direction it will readily be believed, from that which our hero was wont to pursue alone. But as the intimacy with Miss Walton had increased, that with Hillier had declined; and several weeks had passed without the occurrence of any meeting between the two young men, except at dinner in the College Hall. But even from this Lawrence had of late been frequently absent; and there was something in Hillier's manner when they occasionally encountered each other, which gave him the idea, that he either guessed his secret, or at least suspected the existence of one. It was therefore highly probable that he was one of the two horsemen, who had so disturbed Miss Walton's equanimity. But if so, who in the world could be the other? Hillier had less acquaintance with the other men of the party, than even Lawrence himself had. It was every way most unlikely that any one of them should have become so intimate with him, as to take a long ride in his company. Frank, as he pondered over these things on his way homeward, began to think that Teresa might have been mistaken

in supposing the unwelcome intruders to have been acquaintances of his ; a conclusion, which he most devoutly hoped would turn out to be the true one.

He was, therefore, particularly annoyed, on entering the hall for dinner that day, to find that the party had been increased by the addition of Lawford, another undergraduate belonging to what was called the fast set in St. Jude's. He, it appeared, was passing through Oxford on his way northwards, to join a friend who had rented a moor in the wilds of Inverness ; and had called to take Hillier with him for a fortnight's shooting. Lawrence surmised only too surely, that he saw before him the two heroes of the afternoon's encounter. There was an impertinent familiarity, so he thought, in the look which they interchanged, when he asked them, as carelessly as he could, where they had been that afternoon ; and a blackguard insolence (Frank's choler was rapidly rising to boiling heat internally, though outwardly he preserved the utmost *insouciance*), a blackguard insolence in the tone, in which Hillier hoped, in reply, that *he* had passed the afternoon

in an agreeable manner. But when they began immediately afterwards to extol the silvan solitudes of Thorleigh, in which they had heard that there was one particularly romantic glade, popularly known as "The Lover's Walk," Lawrence felt he must be gone, or his patience—we should say rather, what he was in the habit of calling by that name—would hold out no longer. It would have afforded him the most intense satisfaction to launch at the head of the offender the silver mug, out of which he had just been drinking, and which bore inscribed on it, in the purest Ciceronian Latin, the interesting information, that that article, with five others of a like size and pattern had been bequeathed to the College by the Rev. Josiah Dunderhead, for thirty years Fellow of that Foundation, and for thirty years subsequently Rector of the united parishes of Ague-on-Marsh and Fever-le-Fen in the county of Lincoln. It would have afforded him a most diabolical delight to have punished the two delinquents, by hurling, as above stated, the silver mug at the head of one, and kicking the other incontinently down the buttery

stairs. Nay, he would have consigned the one to the churchyard of Ague-on-Marsh, and the other to that of Fever-le-Fen, with the most perfect self-contentment. He had, however, the sense to reflect, even in the plenitude of his wrath, that nothing would be so unwise as to come to an altercation—a blow-up, as he phrased it—on such a subject. Like Achilles, therefore, acting under the judicious counsel of Minerva, “he thrust his great sword back into its sheath,”—that is to say, he withdrew his grasp from the handle of the Rev. Josiah’s flagon; and retired as unconcernedly as he was able—that is to say in a very transparent fit of sulks—to his own rooms.



## CHAPTER XI.

LAWRENCE'S first act was to lock himself in ; his second to draw the curtains across the windows, securing his privacy from inquisitive eyes, those of his scout included. Then he dived his hands into the pockets of his shooting jacket, and began pacing up and down the room.

"Hang those fellows," he muttered between his teeth,—the reader will understand that we do not pledge ourselves to record the precise words of his soliloquy, but like the gentlemen of the press when reporting a debate in the House of Commons, to render it into the nearest presentable English,—“it must have been those two. They had better say

nothing more about it to me, or it will be the worse for them! What right have they to connect me with her in any way? I might have been speaking to her only just for a moment—a mere accidental meeting, for anything they knew! I'll stand none of their chaff, I can tell them. And they had better not intrude themselves upon her either! That snob Lawford is quite capable of it, and so is Hillier too for the matter of that. If they do, they'll find that a lady I know, is not to be insulted with impunity."

Frank did not stop to inquire whether these two suppositions were very consistent with one another, but went on. "Of course it won't do for me to go there again. Teresa was right about that. Hillier is quite capable of dogging my steps. I must stay away for a fortnight at least. And yet, hang it, no, that won't do either," he added, making a pause in front of the fire-place. "I remember now that other beast, Lawford—I remember his telling me and some other fellows that he had fallen in with her one day, just before the college went down. I made out at the time that it must have been Teresa

whom he saw. Perhaps he knows where she lives—I say, this won't do at all."

"Stay though," he resumed, "didn't Dixon tell me that he and Hillier were going to Scotland for a fortnight's shooting in the Highlands? Yes, I remember now that he did. Well that's a blessed riddance! But that's only for a fortnight; and when they come back, there'll be the same trouble again. Something must be done, and done at once before they return. The only question is, what."

Finding no solution to this difficulty in pacing up and down the room, he betook himself to his meerschaum and easy-chair. Under the combined influence of these sedatives, he at length settled down into a calmer frame of mind.

First, he resolved that he would not take any step which would endanger his prospect of succeeding to his grandfather's estate. Frank was not a mercenary character, far from it. But the more he reflected upon the matter, the more convinced he felt that he would never make his own way in the world. If the General were to cast him off, what

would become of him? Was he to take to the law, or to medicine? He could not endure the drudgery of the one, nor the, to him revolting, course of study necessary to the other. The Church? he had no vocation for that, and would not enter it without one. The navy? he was too old for that. Then there were Civil appointments, clerkships at Banks, or public offices, or mercantile houses. But these were *infra dig.*, he thought, to begin with, and afforded pittances so scanty, that he could hardly hope to maintain himself upon them, much less a wife. He might emigrate; but that would be a great risk, and would besides require money, which he would have no hope of obtaining. To be sure, there remained the army, to which he felt no objection. But supposing he could obtain a commission, the pay might keep one, but certainly not two persons, to say nothing of the possibility of more. No, it would be absolute madness to forfeit the prospect of succeeding to the Derwent Court estate.

Secondly, he resolved that he would not give up the pursuit of Teresa. Prudence, no doubt, suggested that as the wisest course;

but Frank was now too deeply in love to call prudence to his counsels. Two months ago, it would have been comparatively easy : one month ago, possible—to make the sacrifice. Now it was out of the question. All the energy of an ardent and passionate nature had for weeks past been concentrated on the attainment of this object. He felt that he was upon the very point of winning the delicious prize. It was impossible for him to forego it now. Besides, it would be most dishonourable.

Frank reflected that the intimacy had been of his seeking from the first; and if Teresa had hearkened to his suit, it was only because he had urged it with a pertinacity which would take no denial. If she did love him, as he felt secretly convinced that she did, it would be unmanly to desert her for what was no fault of hers. No, nothing should induce him to give up Teresa.

These two resolutions accordingly were passed *nem. con.*; but there remained a third, and more difficult question—how were they to be reconciled. Well, there *were* ways. A secret engagement—that might do. Teresa

might; very likely would, consent. She might support herself by her pencil with such help as he could give her, until the General's consent, or death, set them free to follow their own inclinations; or again, a private marriage in some obscure part of the country, or in the heart of London, the most obscure spot in the world—that would serve the purpose as well, or better. Teresa might have the position and advantages of a wife, only under an assumed name. It was most likely that he would be a great deal in London; he might certainly be there a great deal without attracting suspicion. He might in this manner be with her quite as much as many husbands were with their wives. Yes, that arrangement would be the best—every way the best. The other might do as a *dernier resort*. But to be obliged to put off his union with the object of his idolatry for an indefinite time, years probably, and no one could say how many, was a very unwelcome idea. Nor did he much relish the notion of leaving Teresa alone and unprotected in the midst of many trials and temptations, for a period of which no one could foresee the end.

No, the other plan was certainly the best. Frank's imagination had been a good deal impressed, it should be observed, by the perusal of Bulwer's novel of "Night and Morning," in which a pair of lovers situated precisely in the same position as Teresa and himself, had resolved on the same expedient which he now proposed, and with complete success—only the gentleman unluckily broke his neck after his succession to his uncle's estate, before he had time to acknowledge his marriage.

"It was no end of a dodge that," he exclaimed, "and if I can only get Teresa to agree, we will try it ourselves. I'll persuade her to read the book, and I am sure"—But at this moment it occurred to him that a perusal of the book in question would not be particularly likely to make the *lady* consent to such a scheme; forasmuch as the heroine was there represented as having suffered a great deal of mortification and opprobrium during her husband's lifetime, and still greater troubles after his death, in consequence of the very stratagem he was advocating. "No," he said, after a moment's

pause, "I think we had better let 'Night and Morning' alone; and if it is really likely to injure her, and make her unhappy, I am not such a brute as to urge it."

"But then, once more, what is to be done? Would it be so impossible, after all, to reconcile my grandfather to the marriage? It would certainly be a stiffish matter; but I don't see why it should be *impossible* either. I don't know the whole of Teresa's history, and have only learned what I do know, from occasional scraps of information which she has let fall. But I know she is certainly a lady on the father's side, and I fancy on the mother's too. And if she were handsomely dressed and well introduced, she would hold her place in society, as well as any lady in the land. There is nothing against her after all, but want of money; and really I don't think the old General cares for that. At all events it is worth trying. I don't mean, of course, to tell him flatly all about it; but just feel one's way, and see how the land lies."

Acting on this resolution, Lawrence sat down and indited with infinite pains a letter to his grandfather, destroying in the process



more sheets of paper than he had used in the whole course of his correspondence for the last twelvemonth. Sooth to say, his letters to General Lawrence, of which we have given one specimen, were, for the most part, remarkable for nothing but their brevity, and the extremely narrow range of subjects they embraced; the latter being limited to remarks on the dulness of Oxford, and inquiries as to the state of the General's health, or, perhaps, the condition of the stud, and the abundance of the game in the preserves. To-day, however, he took a wider range. He spoke of his approaching examination, and hoped he should satisfy his grandfather's expectations. He, of course, would leave the University when his degree was over, and he had been wondering what would become of him then. Where should he be, and what would he be doing ten or twelve years hence? Who could guess? Perhaps he might be a *paterfamilias* by that time, with a houseful of children! He could hardly fancy himself a Benedick. He did not think he was one who would be easily satisfied. At all events, he was resolved on one thing,

that if he ever *did* marry, his wife should be a lady in mind and manners. Did not the General think these were the important points; and, if there was no drawback in this respect, that all other considerations were of very minor importance? He was curious to know what the General thought on these subjects. There was no one whose opinion would have such weight with him as his on such matters, if ever the time should come, &c., &c.

Frank rather plumed himself on the skill wherewith he had handled this delicate topic, without having in any way, as he thought, compromised himself. But, alas, this theory, like many others which originated in the brain of Francis Lawrence, was doomed to an early extinction. The reader has already learned how General Lawrence received the epistle of his grandson, and will not wonder therefore that two days afterwards, the latter, on emerging from his bedroom, perceived on the breakfast table a letter in the well-known handwriting of his grandfather; nor that his face after a perusal of the same, exhibited unequivocal symptoms both of sur-

prise and vexation. The letter ran as follows :—

“ Derwent Court, August 18—

“ My dear Frank,

“ I am pleased at the anxiety you express relative to your degree, and at your deference to my known desire, that you should pass with credit. I should not indeed attribute much weight to a mere profession of feeling on this subject. But your conduct in giving up your own wishes, and settling down to work in Oxford, which I have no doubt is as dull at this time of the year as you describe it, are proofs that you are in earnest in what you profess.

(“ Hem,” interpolated Lawrence, a little conscience stricken, as he read this, “ I wish he would not say that.”)

“ I am glad also that you are beginning to think seriously of your future career in life. Whatever profession or pursuit you may resolve on taking up, I hope you will adhere to steadily. I have a great dislike to the flighty manner in which young men nowadays choose a profession, and then change their minds about it, merely because

they have grown tired of the drudgery which the first study of it involves. I was vexed to hear of young Nevinson's change of purpose a month or two ago. I had fancied him a more sterling and solid character. Either he must have adopted the Church as a profession, without having given the matter due thought, or he must have given up his intention in a sudden fit of caprice—neither of which things are pardonable, in my judgment. I am glad, therefore, to find you growing thoughtful. But it is possible to exercise too much, as well as too little, forethought; and for once in a way, I am inclined to charge you with this—a very strange offence for you to commit! What has come to you, my dear Frank, that you should encumber yourself, though only in fancy, with a family of children, or speculate on the qualities desirable in a wife? Seriously, I hope you are not unconsciously allowing your fancy to be captivated by some Oxford belle. I remember having a horror of Oxford belles, when I was a youth there; and it is one of the youthful horrors, which advancing years have not removed. Nothing would be more unwelcome to me, or more

injurious to yourself, than such an entanglement. But after all, I am most likely mistaken in supposing anything of the kind.

“ I am ever, my dear Frank,

“ Yours affectionately,

“ JAMES LAWRENCE.”

“ P.S.—Remember that I have a reason for what I say, and am not likely to change my mind, when it is made up.”

“ Encouraging !” exclaimed Lawrence, as he threw down the letter, “ I might as well have let that alone. Well, what is to be done now? Am I to give it up? No, by Jove !” he continued, starting up, “ that I won’t, come what may of it. It is all very well for my grandfather to talk in that way. I wonder how he would have liked it at my age himself, to be dictated to in that style ! ‘ Remember, I have a reason for what I say.’ I have no doubt he has. He wants to marry me to some woman of his own choosing. I have more than once suspected that from hints he has let drop. Old Burdon’s dumpy daughter perhaps, whom he is always asking to the house. But that is going it

rather too strong. A joke is a joke, as the eel said, when the cook skinned him ; but a joke may be carried too far, as the same eel remarked, when the cook proceeded to stew him alive. No, no, I am not going to marry Miss Burdon, or Miss anyone else, old boy, at your bidding. Though Derwent Court be your's

“ From turret and foundation stone,  
The hand of Francis is his own.  
And ne'er shall that in wedlock's grasp  
The hand of such as Burdon clasp !

“ But after all there remains the old question, ‘ what is to be done ? ’ which same question has been discussed a good many times without having been settled. Meerschauum and easy-chair again ; and the question *shall be* settled.”

And after another hour's consultation with these privy councillors, the question was settled—so far that is, as Frank had the power of settling it. He first wrote a letter to his grandfather, assuring him (somewhat Jesuitically it is to be feared) that he was in no danger of falling in love with an Oxford belle ; a genus whom he regarded with an

aversion which rivalled that of the General himself. The latter might dismiss his fears, so far as Oxford belles were concerned ; not only for the present, but for ever. Next he resolved that he would seek an interview with Miss Walton as early as possible ; would frankly acknowledge the affection with which she had inspired him ; and the embarrassing circumstances in which he was placed. Having disclosed this, he would try to gain her consent to a clandestine union, or if he could not succeed in that, at least to a positive engagement. Thirdly, he resolved to obtain from Teresa the particulars of her birth, family, and early history ; in order that he might make out as good a case in his own favour as possible, in event of the matter, notwithstanding all his precautions, reaching his grandfather's ears.

It must be admitted that, as Lawrence secured the envelope of the letter addressed to the General, he felt considerable compunction at the stratagem—his conscience was disposed to call it deception—which he was about to practise on both Teresa and his grandfather. He fortified himself however, as well as he

could, with the old adage that all is fair in love, war, and politics—an adage which verily and indeed is an old one; as old we may venture to say as the Father of Lies himself; but we take leave to doubt its being any better, on that account. A noble writer of the present day has impaled on his righteous indignation, and held up to universal scorn, the infernal maxim, that a young man must needs sow his wild oats in his youth. Let us, good reader, follow the lead he has given us, and hang up in the moral pillory beside it (for it is well worthy of such company) the maxim which teaches that a man may, without blame, cheat, lie or betray his friend, if the object he has in view be something on which his heart is very deeply set. If that is not the meaning of the adage in question, the only alternative is that love, war, and politics—all of them—confessedly belong to the domain of the arch-deceiver of souls, and let not love at least be so maligned.

Lawrence soon shook off his compunctious visitings. "One o'clock, I vow," he exclaimed, as his scout entered with his luncheon, "well if this morning has been lost to Logic and to



Herodotus, I at least am not to blame. By the bye, Dixon, have you seen Mr. Hillier or Mr. Lawford this morning?"

"Went by the Birmingham coach on Tuesday night, Sir," replied Dixon. "I took Mr. Lawford's luggage, and saw them off myself. Anything more, Mr. Lawrence?"

"Nothing but this letter for the post. Come," he added, as his scout left the room, "that is a good riddance at all events. I hope the sport may keep them two months, instead of two weeks. And now it occurs to me that to-morrow is Teresa's day for coming into Oxford to settle with that old rascal Wrightsen. If I should write a line to ask her to meet me on her return, at the gate leading to Orsett's Folly, I don't think she would refuse. Any how I will make the attempt." He sat down and wrote his note, which he posted with his own hands at the principal office in the evening, and then retired to bed, to dream of Teresa.

It may here be observed, that Lawrence succeeded subsequently in obtaining the desired information respecting Miss Walton's early history. But it reached him at different

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times and through various channels. We prefer, therefore, anticipating his knowledge for the benefit of the reader ; and give it at this point of the story in a continuous narrative.

## CHAPTER XII.

THERE is a little hamlet, to which we will give the name of St. Ebbe's, snugly nestling in a valley enclosed by precipitous rocks, on one of the wildest spots of the Cornish coast. The inhabitants exclusively occupied in fishing, appear to think that dry land possesses no other use, than that of affording them a place where they may build their cottages in security from the violence of the winds and waves—like turtles which come ashore for the purpose of laying and hatching their eggs, but pass the rest of their existence in the water. If there were truth in the Darwinian theory, they ought long since to have developed webs between their fingers and toes, or fins beneath their shoulders, seeing that

they devote their whole lives to pursuits, in which these appendages would be of the most material service. At an early age the boys accompany their fathers on their fishing excursions, and the girls are instructed in the mysteries of manufacturing and mending nets; in preparation for their becoming in due time the wives of fishermen, as their mothers and mothers' mothers have been before them to generations too remote for calculation. At the date to which this part of the story belongs, the roads leading to the nearest towns were at all times rough and intricate, and at some seasons of the year, quite impassable. But this inconvenience was but little felt by the inhabitants of St. Ebbe's. With the fishing towns, to which they were in the habit of carrying the produce of their labours for sale, and where they purchased the necessaries of life, they could always communicate by water; and with their inland neighbours they neither had, nor desired to have, any great amount of intercourse.

We have said that the village consisted exclusively of fishermen, but there was one exception to this. A large cottage in the most

sequestered nook of the valley, was occupied by a family, of whom their neighbours knew little or nothing. It consisted of two brothers, foreigners, and (it was generally believed) Spaniards, tall powerfully-built men, dark-haired, and dark-eyed, with a certain dignity of manner; which, coupled with their courage and seamanship, won for them respect and even liking, notwithstanding the reserve they maintained towards their neighbours. It was whispered that they were exiles from their native country, concerned in some conspiracy, which had caused a heavy price to be set on their heads; or, as some affirmed, criminals flying from justice, who were afraid to enter any society in which they might be recognised. There was nothing beyond mere rumour to support either theory; and the reports soon died out, or smouldered on in silence.

Both the brothers had been married. The wife of the younger was still living, an ordinary English peasant woman from one of the Midland counties; who (as the story went) had been instrumental once in saving José Nunez's life, and in gratitude for the

act, had been made his wife. Alonzo, the elder brother, was a widower with one daughter; whose graceful figure, dark eyes and tresses, and pale olive complexion, formed a strange contrast to the ruddy cheeks, light hair, and sturdy frames of the Cornish belles. But Jacinta was so unaffectedly kind and gentle to all with whom she came in contact, as to disarm the envy which the brilliancy of her beauty would otherwise have provoked. She was regarded rather as the pride and ornament of the village, than in the light of a dangerous rival, by the girls of her own age—the more so as she never seemed to attract, certainly never encouraged, the attentions of the other sex.

It happened many years after their settlement at St. Ebbe's, that the brothers proceeding to their employment at an earlier hour than usual, were startled by finding on the shore, what seemed to be a corpse thrown up by the waves. It was dressed in the uniform of a midshipman of the Royal Navy, and the wearer was a young man of two or three and twenty years old. They lifted the body between them and conveyed it to their

cottage, where every exertion was made to restore animation. After a long time they succeeded. The youth opened his eyes, gazing round him with a look of terror, and his first words were an entreaty to his preservers not to betray him. Assured on this point, he sank into a slumber, from which he awakened a few hours afterwards greatly refreshed. He then asked anxiously for the clothes of which he had been stripped; and finding that a large package was safe, which had been secured by a belt round his waist, he consigned it to his host's custody, with a request that it might be carefully locked up. After which he once more fell asleep.

A week's rest seemed to have entirely restored his strength, but he gave no hint of leaving the quarters where he had been so hospitably cared for. He began to take part in the daily toil of his entertainers, accompanying them on their fishing expeditions, and showing himself not only a willing, but a skilful assistant. After some weeks of residence in the village, he disclosed to Alonzo Nunez all that was ever known of his history by any inhabitant of St. Ebbe's.

His name, he said, was Francis Walton. He was an orphan, and possessed of a small independence. But he had been compelled by his uncle and guardian, many years before, to enter the Navy. He had always disliked the service ; which had become doubly distasteful to him from the harshness of the captain, under whom he had been placed. At that time a great deal of tyranny might be practised with impunity in the King's service ; and young Walton had suffered hardships, which would now scarcely be credited. He had borne them with tolerable patience, hoping as soon as he attained his majority to purchase his discharge. But the enmity of his captain, who was a fast friend of his uncle, defeated this intention. He was detained year after year, on one pretext or another on foreign stations, until he was nearly three-and twenty. During this time he was frequently exposed to dangers of all kinds without apparent reason ; the motive of his persecutors being (as he at least believed) to compass his death by one device or another.

At last, in the year 1816, his ship, the 'Narcissus,' was ordered home. Walton's



heart leaped as he heard the news, for once in England, he was sensible that his discharge could not be refused him. He had resolved, long since, that the moment he had obtained his freedom, he would go abroad and never return during his guardian's lifetime. He had already made the necessary preparations for flight. His money had been converted into Bank of England notes—the numbers of which, as he had taken care, could not be traced to him—and was sometimes concealed in a secret place in his cabin, sometimes in a belt which he wore under his trousers. These precautions, he thought exultingly, would not be much longer needed. Every day of the homeward voyage seemed a sundering of one more link of his chain, and the joyful cry that land was in sight, sounded like an assurance that his sorrows were ended for ever.

Alas for human expectations! No sooner had the ship anchored in Falmouth Roads, that an order from the Admiralty was received, requiring the Captain to make preparation for taking Marines on board, and proceeding with the least possible delay to join Lord Exmouth's fleet at Algiers. This filled up

the measure of Walton's despair. He saw in a moment that not only was there no present prospect of his obtaining his discharge, but in the perilous service on which the ship was now about to be sent, there was little doubt that the Captain would succeed in effecting the purpose on which he had long been bent. He was fully persuaded that unless he could escape now, all hope was over for him. Desperate as the attempt was, he resolved to make it. He provided himself with a stout spar sufficient to support him in the water, and a rope by which he might secure himself to it, and these he carefully hid away. He had resolved to leave the ship on the night before that on which she sailed for Algiers; but before that time arrived, an unexpected chance of deliverance presented itself.

The Captain, when he went on shore, had left strict orders that Walton was not to be allowed to leave the ship, but the fact was unknown to the third lieutenant, and Walton contrived to get on board one of the boats sent to fetch the Marine officers' luggage. He had no sooner landed than he made

inquiry for the residence of the Port-Admiral, to whom he was resolved to relate his story, and entreat his protection. He ascertained this without difficulty ; but before he could reach the house, he was seized by some of the seamen of the 'Narcissus,' and in spite of his representations, carried on board again. His absence had been noticed almost immediately after the boat had left the ship, and the first lieutenant, fearing the captain's anger, had immediately dispatched a party after him. He would hear nothing that Walton had to say.

The captain's orders had been distinctly disobeyed, even if there had been no attempt to desert. At all events, the whole matter must be stated to the captain, as soon as he came on board. Meanwhile Walton was to confine himself to his cabin ; and if he again left it, he would be put in irons. This seemed the climax of his misfortunes ; but in the end, it proved rather favourable than otherwise to his design. Late on the following day the captain returned on board, and orders were given for the ship to sail in two hours from that time. It will readily be

believed that everyone was too busy to pay any attention to the case of the young master's mate for the present. The dusk was coming on by the time the 'Narcissus' left the harbour ; and she was followed almost immediately by another vessel, desiring her to wait for some dispatches for Lord Exmouth, which would be sent on board in a few hours. The 'Narcissus,' accordingly, lay off at a distance of about four miles from land—the coast low, sandy, and desolate being clearly visible in the light of the setting sun.

Walton seized the favourable moment. He wrote a few lines on a piece of paper which he pinned to his hammock, declaring his intention of ridding himself of life, which, through the cruelty of his superiors, had long become a burden to him. He then filled a bag with some heavy articles, and carrying this with him crept cautiously out of his cabin. No one noticed him. It was a dark, moonless night—the very night for such a purpose as his ; and the right moment had arrived, for the tide had begun to set in shore. He stole to the spot where he had left the spar and rope, and lowering them

into the sea, secured them to the chains. He then made his way on deck to the side of the ship furthest from the shore, and threw the bag into the sea, shouting "man over-board" at the top of his voice. The cry was instantly taken up, and a rush made to the place where the splash had been heard.

Walton himself, stooping down, and gliding along under the guns, reached the spot where he had left the spar, and lowered himself noiselessly into the sea. The tide was now running strongly towards the shore; and the yard to which he clung was carried along with great rapidity. After a few minutes, when he ventured to raise his head, and look in the direction of the 'Narcissus,' he found he was already a long way from her—her poop lights twinkling faintly in the darkness, and the voices of the men on board her, being almost inaudible. The night was so murky, that it was impossible for him to discover the direction in which he was being carried, or the distance at which the coast might now lie. Getting astride of the spar, he lashed himself to it as firmly as he could, and endeavoured to keep

off the chill which crept over him, by sips of brandy from the flask with which he had provided himself. In this manner he was swept onwards by the tide for several hours; a far longer time than would have sufficed, according to his calculation, to bring him to shore.

At last he was roused from the torpor, which, in spite of all his efforts, had overpowered him, by a sudden shock. The spar had been stranded on a reef of rocks, part of which rose above the level of the tide. He had barely strength to disengage himself from the rope, and scramble to the highest point of the reef, sheltering himself between two rocks against the blast which now blew freshly from the sea. After an interval which seemed endlessly protracted, the dawn began to break. He saw the coast at the distance of about a quarter of a mile from him.

His first glance showed him that he must have been carried a long way from the spot, off which the 'Narcissus' had been lying. The shore in that neighbourhood was low and shelving; nor had there been any appearance of human habitations. But here

there were bold rocks rising abruptly from the sea, and ravines dotted with fishermen's cottages. A little fleet of boats lay moored close off shore in the harbour, of which one side was formed by the reef on which he had been stranded. If he could but reach the shore, he was safe. But his dull and swimming eyes saw with dismay, that the rocks, even at low water—and the tide was now at the lowest—were separated from the mainland by an interval of two or three hundred yards, at the least. He was a good swimmer, but his strength was now so exhausted, and his limbs so chilled by many hours of immersion, that he feared they would never bear him across even the little space which still lay between him and safety.

But the attempt must be made, and made at once, or it would be too late. It might be hours, even now, before any of the fishermen would come out to their morning's work, and he was not sure that the rising tide would not cover the spot where he was now lying. Nor would he have strength to hail them, even if they should appear sooner. No, he must make the effort. He

rose with difficulty, and staggered over the surface of the reef; sometimes supporting himself by the rocks, sometimes crawling on his hands and knees, until with incredible difficulty, he had reached the furthest point of the reef. Lowering himself into the water, and rallying all his powers, he now struck out for the land. He made but little progress. His limbs refused to obey his will. Again and again he felt that his exertions were useless, he would never reach the land. But again and again the instinct of self-preservation roused him, and he struggled desperately onwards, foot by foot, nearer to the goal. At last his feet sunk under him; but as they did so, they alighted on a firm hard bottom. He was in shallow water, not above thirty yards from shore. Rousing for the last time, his sinking faculties, he plunged forward, reached the firm sand, reeled rather than walked for a few steps, and then fell in a swoon of exhaustion on the spot, where a quarter of an hour afterwards the Spaniards found him.

It is almost needless to add that no suspicion of the truth was entertained on board



His Majesty's ship 'Narcissus.' The melancholy and discontent which had long marked young Walton's character; his well known dislike of the service, and disappointment at being unable to leave it; the prospect of punishment for the offence he had committed, which the notorious enmity of the captain would probably magnify into desertion—these were sufficient in themselves to furnish an explanation of the disaster. But when to these was added the notice found pinned in his cabin, and the plunge in the sea, which had been heard by several of the sailors—there remained but little doubt in any one's mind that the unfortunate midshipman had been goaded by the hardships of his superiors into the crime of suicide. It was indeed thought strange by some that the body had never been found. The 'Narcissus' was lying only a few miles from shore at the time of the young man's disappearance; and the tide, it was distinctly remembered, was then running towards the land. But those who knew the coast well, represented that there was a strong cross current at that point, which would in all likelihood carry the body a long way towards

the west, and possibly out into the open sea.

Besides this, no formal investigation was ever made of the case. The 'Narcissus' sailed almost immediately afterwards for the coast of Africa, without having had any further communication with the shore. It will readily be understood that the captain was in no hurry to report a story not very creditable to himself, and which might lead to awkward inquiries. He postponed writing home until he had reached Algiers, and soon after his arrival at that place, his correspondence was cut short for ever. The 'Narcissus' suffered severely on the day of the bombardment, and poor Francis's chief persecutors, the captain, the first-lieutenant, and the captain's steward, were all killed in the action.

There were not wanting those who hinted that their fate was due to retributive justice for the long continued persecution, ending at last in what was little better than a legalised murder, of the unhappy lad. But whatever guilt might attach to them, there was certainly one person who was guiltier still, and that was young Walton's uncle and guardian. He was a man of old family and

large estate. But the latter was strictly entailed on his nephew, in event of his own death without lawful heirs. His own marriage had been childless. But there was an illegitimate son, brought up in his own house, of whom he was extremely fond. This was the true reason of his hatred of poor Francis Walton. The secret of his son's birth had been carefully kept from the knowledge of the nephew, who had always been brought up to regard his cousin as his uncle's unquestioned heir. Nor did he even know that in event of the lad's death, he would have any claim on the family estate, which he supposed to be absolutely in his uncle's power to devise to whom he willed. He knew too well his uncle's feelings towards him, to entertain for a moment the idea that he would, under any circumstance, choose him as his heir. Hence his object always had been to escape, the moment it was in his power to do so, from all the associations connected with his unhappy boyhood ; and begin a new life in some spot, where he would hear as little as possible of anything relating to the old one.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE particulars of his sufferings and escape were confided by young Walton to Alonzo Nunez, about three weeks after his arrival at St. Ebbe's, with an earnest entreaty that he would keep them, and any other particulars which he might learn respecting him, an inviolable secret. The Spaniard readily gave his promise. There were so many points of similarity in their histories, that a feeling of sympathy and mutual trust at once sprang up between them. Both had suffered severely from oppressive laws and private animosity. Both had been obliged to renounce their position in life, and hide themselves in an obscure corner of the world, from the enemies who had already injured them so

deeply. Both had the strongest reasons for maintaining inviolate the incognito they had adopted. It was no wonder therefore that Alonzo entered heartily into the young man's feelings, and swore on the honour of a Spanish gentleman, that no hint of his guest's history should ever escape him.

Mr. Walton then proceeded to say, that it was his wish to continue, for the present at least, his residence in the secluded village where the waves had thrown him up. He was aware of the penalty to which he had rendered himself liable by desertion from his ship during war time; a penalty which he felt satisfied that his enemies would do their utmost to enforce against him. It seemed, therefore, his only hope to remain under an assumed name in his present quarters; at least until a sufficient time had elapsed, to blunt the edge of the inquiries which might be set on foot. He pointed out to Nunez that the villagers did not know in what manner he had reached the cottage which now sheltered him. No one had seen the uniform in which he was dressed, except Alonzo and his brother; and it had instantly been laid

aside. Nor had any communication passed between the Spaniards and the inhabitants of the village on the subject. It was generally believed among them that Walton was some friend of Alonzo's, who had been intimate with him in his more prosperous days, and had now come to visit him in his seclusion. Every clue which might connect his present existence with his past history, appeared to be cut off. There seemed to be nothing which was likely to prevent his passing his life in the quiet which he had always desired ; but which the experience of the last few years had rendered the great charm of existence in his eyes. He had, therefore, he informed his hearer, already purchased a cottage, situated at no great distance from that in which the Spaniard resided ; and he requested permission to continue for some time longer under the hospitable roof which sheltered him—not as guest, but as lodger—while his new residence was being enlarged, and furnished for his reception.

Alonzo complied, though not without some little hesitation. He liked his young guest, and as we have seen, sympathised

heartily in the feelings which had driven him to seek retirement. He was also by no means indifferent to the liberal sum, which was offered by Walton, as the equivalent for his board and lodging ; for the Spaniard was poor, and the family were at some seasons hard pressed to find the means of subsistence. But there was a difficulty in the person of his daughter Jacinta, who was now in her eighteenth year—the ripe age of Spanish, as a year or two later is, of English beauty.

Notwithstanding the eulogy pronounced by Walton on the peaceful seclusion of St. Ebbe's, he had some lurking suspicion, that Jacinta's charms had no small share in determining his choice of residence. He had noticed that for the last ten days his guest had rarely accompanied him to the fishing ; and his sister-in-law had warned him, that the young people, as she called them, were constantly together during his absence. If he permitted him to continue to reside under his roof for the next five or six months — and the proposed improvements to the cottage would certainly not occupy less time—there could be little doubt of what would be the result. But again he

reflected that the young man, so far as he could discover, was no unsuitable match for his daughter : less unsuitable, at all events, than any other person she was likely to meet. Her marriage with him would at least afford her the means of maintenance, independently of her own personal labour, and he would not himself be separated from her. Further in the event of his death, and that of José, should she still be unprovided for—there would be no other refuge open to her, but the protection which some distant relative might coldly and unwillingly extend to her, or the yet more unwelcome shelter of a convent. He therefore resolved to let matters take their course ; and exhorted his sister-in-law to keep a vigilant eye on the youthful couple, and report to him anything she judged to be of importance ; but to preserve a discreet silence so far as the parties themselves were concerned.

Everything fell out according to his expectations. Before the end of the half year the improvements in the cottage had been completed. It had originally contained four rooms, two on the ground floor and two above. To



these had now been added two tolerable sized sitting-rooms, with bedrooms above them, a porch, and some out-houses; rendering the whole a comfortable, and for that neighbourhood, even a luxurious residence.

The inclosure of a walled garden, and a ship-load of furniture and books which arrived from Plymouth, completed Mr. Walton's arrangements. By the autumn of the year the house was declared fit for occupation; and when its owner announced to Nunez his intention of quitting his present quarters to take possession of it, he begged permission to take with him Jacinta as its mistress. Alonzo smilingly gave the formal consent, which long had been virtually accorded; and it was agreed that the wedding should be celebrated without needless delay—as soon in short as Jacinta was willing to allow it.

There was in fact nothing to delay the nuptials. Settlements were out of the question; the lady having neither money nor jewels which could be secured to her. Both parties, however, had a great reluctance, for reasons of their own, to have the marriage performed in the parish church, situated some three

miles away. The Rector was non-resident; but they might have to answer the Curate's inquiries, which would be by no means agreeable to them. It would be better to seek the shelter of some large city, where the great numbers of the inhabitants rendered them less curious on the subject of their neighbours' affairs. Accordingly, after due consultation with José, the whole party with the exception of José's wife, who was left in charge of the premises, quitted St. Ebbe's, and sailed in Alonzo's boat to Bristol. Here they established themselves in lodgings, in one of the obscurest corners of that huge city; and here the banns were put up, along with those of fifty other couples, in one of the parish churches a few streets from them.

Walton, at the same time, lodged the sum which he had carried with him from the 'Narcissus,' with a respectable bank, which offered five per cent on the deposit. The purchase of a cottage at St. Ebbe's, together with the expenses of enlarging and furnishing it, had reduced his principal by some hundreds of pounds. But the interest of what remained would give him an income of somewhere about two hundred a year; a sum

which, in a neighbourhood so primitive as that of St. Ebbe's, was fully adequate to secure the comforts of life. About a fortnight after the completion of this transaction, the wedding took place in the presence of Alonzo and José ; who, with the parish clerk and beadle, were the only witnesses. The elder Spaniard took the precaution of obtaining from the officiating clergyman, an attested certificate of the marriage. Then the party returned to Cornwall in the same manner in which they had quitted it ; and Walton and his wife took up their residence permanently at St. Ebbe's.

It rarely happens that a man, who has cherished through many years of continued trouble and disappointment a vision of ideal happiness, finds himself in a position to test the soundness of his theory. Still more rarely does he, on attaining such a position, find the reality accord with the conception. Yet in the instance of Walton such proved to be the case. His union with Jacinta was followed by twenty years of unbroken peace and enjoyment. He found in the wife which so strange a chance had assigned to him, the

partner among ten thousand, who was exactly suited to his refined taste and sensitive affection.

He was passionately fond of music and painting, and might have reached high excellence in either study, had circumstances permitted him to pursue them without interruption. Jacinta had inherited from her mother an exquisite ear and voice ; which, in her earlier youth had been carefully trained. She possessed also the poetry of the soul, which elevates the mere performer into the artist ; and though she had no knowledge of painting, she was gifted with a keen eye for the picturesque, and the instinctive apprehension of the graceful, which renders even the unlearned a fit companion for the profoundest masters of their art. Her disposition, shy, reserved, and passionate, was calculated at once to fascinate and retain his affection ; and the peculiar circumstances of their position cutting them off from society, as absolutely as if they had been inhabitants of Shakespeare's enchanted island—which would have been but a questionable advantage in most instances — only served to deepen and strengthen their interest in each other.

They had four children. The two eldest were boys, fine, manly urchins as ever delighted a parent's heart ; then a girl, and after an interval of more than thirteen years, another boy, the pet and plaything of the whole household. The elder sons were beginning to approach manhood ; and the father, who had educated them himself with much success, was beginning to be much perplexed how to start them in life in a manner suitable to their birth and nurture, when a sudden blow fell upon the quiet household, and cut short his anxieties respecting them for ever.

It was the autumn of one of those years, in which the cholera paid its first visits to this country ; and it was a strange characteristic of its earlier appearances, that it sometimes fastened its deadly gripe, and worked its most frightful ravages, in localities which would have seemed the least likely of all to suffer from its presence. Among other spots which, contrary to all expectation, it assailed most fiercely, was the little village of St. Ebbe's. Within a few days of the outbreak of the disorder, half the inhabitants had been

stricken down; and the hearty and thriving population were reduced to the mournful condition of the doomed Egyptians, when they woke up to find that there was not a household among them where there was not one dead.

In particular, the Waltons and their relatives were heavily visited. Alonzo and José Nunez were the first victims; then Walton's two elder sons, and, lastly, Jacinta; who, weakened by anxiety and attendance on the sick, was unable to struggle against the virulence of the malady. Walton had been attacked before his wife, and for a long time the struggle between life and death was nearly balanced. When the scale turned on the side of life at last, and he recovered his consciousness so far as to understand the greatness of his loss, the shock caused a relapse, which again brought him to the gates of death. The care and tenderness of his little daughter, Teresa, then in her fourteenth year, brought him safely through it. As the sufferer watched from his sick bed the movements of his little nurse, who promised to resemble, not only in grace and beauty, but in tenderness and affectionate devotion

the treasure which he had lost, he ceased to repine at the decrees of Providence, and was contented to live for her.

She became from that hour the sole and constant companion of his solitude, the care of the little Frederick being entirely given over to José's widow. The delight he took in cultivating Teresa's talents for music and drawing, the former of which she inherited partly from her mother, but the latter exclusively from himself, afforded him the only comfort, which could make endurable the recollection of the past. Year after year, as it went by, developed the likeness to her mother, both in mind and body; till in her seventeenth year she seemed to him the very impersonation of the Jacinta, whom he had first beheld more than twenty years before. The only differences which he could detect, were the deep blue of her eyes, derived, as he loved to think, entirely from him, and the complexion, which though slightly tinged with the olive of the south, approached more nearly to the white and red of English beauty.

The same anxiety which had troubled him

three or four years before in the instance of his sons, now began to be felt anew, and more seriously than before. He was sensible that it was time for him to exchange the solitude of the Cornish village for some place where she could mix in society, suited to her birth and accomplishments. She could not continue to reside at St. Ebbe's all her life, at least not without some protector; and in event of his death, she would be left without any near relative—except indeed, the peasant woman whom her uncle José had married, and who, since her husband's death, had resided with them.

But Walton was aware that in no respect was she a suitable companion, much less a suitable guardian, for his daughter. There was no one in their neighbourhood in whom she could possibly find a husband; and it could hardly be expected that the ocean would perform the same office for her, which it had performed for her mother, and throw up on its shore a suitor worthy of her hand, like the enchanted prince of a fairy tale. Moreover, the rare talent for painting which Teresa evinced, ought, he felt, to receive the



most careful cultivation; and she had now arrived at the point when the best masters in London ought to be provided for her.

Mr. Walton weighed these matters well, and at last came to the resolution of removing to the metropolis, and re-entering society. He reflected that the lapse of more than twenty years must have removed the persons, who had been the bitter persecutors of his early life. Even if that should prove not to be the case, they could surely have no disposition now to renew their former animosity. But it would be more prudent before taking the step, to ascertain how far it might be safe to resume thus his real name. He resolved for that purpose, therefore, to pay a visit to the gentleman, who had been his uncle's solicitor at the time he attained his majority, and who had always treated him with courtesy and kindness. From him he might ascertain what was the position of affairs, without revealing his present incognito. Feeling, however, that in any case he must leave St. Ebbe's, his first step was to sell his house and garden. He found a purchaser in a naval officer from Plymouth; who, during

the previous summer, had chanced to pass a day or two at St. Ebbe's, in the course of a yachting expedition ; and had been so delighted with the spot, that he had offered to give Mr. Walton a handsome price for his snuggerly as he called it, whenever it suited him to part with it. With the money thus obtained, and the savings out of his income, which he had effected during his residence in Cornwall, he proposed to purchase, or rent, a small house in London. He reckoned that the interest derived from the bank at Bristol, would be sufficient, with strict economy, for the support of Teresa and himself, as well as for the education of the former.

Accordingly he departed from St. Ebbe's ; and a day or two afterwards Miss Walton received a letter from him, dated from London. In this he informed her, that he had inquired for the solicitor, whom, she was aware, he wished to see ; but he had been unable to find him.

It appeared that he had quitted London fourteen or fifteen years before, and had settled in a town somewhere in the north of

England. As it was too far for him to think of undertaking a journey thither, he had written a letter to him asking for the information he desired. It was his intention to remain in London until the arrival of the lawyer's reply. A few days afterwards a second letter came to hand. Mr. Walton had received an answer from the solicitor of a most important character. He would not enter upon the particulars now, but would communicate them to her on his return to St. Ebbe's. As regarded the other matters for which he had come to London, he had been successful in his search for masters, and had also found a house which, he thought, would suit them. As an offset to this good news, he was sorry to tell her that he had that morning heard of the failure of the Bristol bankers with whom his capital was deposited, and it was feared that scarcely sixpence in the pound would be realised—at least, not for some years to come. It was his intention to return to St. Ebbe's by way of Bristol, in order to make inquiries, and see that his interest was properly cared for. He added, however, that the news he had received from

the North, was of such a character, as to make this misfortune of comparatively small consequence.

Several days passed without the receipt of any further communication from Mr. Walton. Teresa was not uneasy, for she felt sure that he was on his way homewards, and might arrive at any moment. The days however grew into a week, and the week began to extend itself to the dimensions of a fortnight, and it was impossible not to apprehend that some misfortune had occurred. Her melancholy forebodings were soon terribly verified. Toward the end of the second week a report was circulated in St. Ebbe's, and was soon confirmed, that Mr. Walton had perished on board the Bristol steamer about ten days previously. It appeared that soon after leaving harbour, an explosion had taken place, by which several passengers, and Mr. Walton among them, had been killed. The steamer had put back into Bristol, and the bodies of the sufferers had been carried on shore. The corpse of Mr. Walton had been identified by the landlord of the inn where he had lodged, and

afterwards buried in St. Jorworth's churchyard.

Teresa and her aunt had now to sit down and determine what it would be best for them to do. Their position was embarrassing and painful in the extreme. Mr. Walton had taken with him the money, which he had received for the sale of his house, and it was altogether unknown what he had done with it. The income derived from the Bristol Bank was, it appeared, at an end. They were in fact penniless, with the exception of a small annuity on the life of Mrs. Nunez, which the slender property left her by her husband a few years before had enabled her to purchase. It was a sum barely sufficient to pay the rent of a labourer's cottage, and provide the merest necessities of life. Still it was better than starvation, and Teresa was thankful to accept for herself, and her little brother Frederick, now a child of about five years old, the home which her aunt offered her. Miss Walton would fain have remained for the present at St. Ebbe's, where many of their neighbours would willingly have received them as lodgers; but Mrs. Nunez

declared that nothing should induce her to remain any longer in those outlandish parts, as she still continued to style Cornwall, notwithstanding her thirty years' residence in it. She was resolved to go back and end her days in the Oxfordshire village, where the first part of her life had been passed.

Accordingly, as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, they journeyed, partly by coach, partly by waggon, through the intervening counties, and arrived early in the spring of the year at the village of Thorleigh, Mrs. Nunez's native place. Here Teresa at once addressed herself to procuring, if possible, a livelihood by her pencil. It must not be supposed that she was unmindful of the letter, which she had received from her father, in which he spoke of some communication of importance having been received from the North of England, which might render the failure of the Bristol Bank of comparatively minor importance. But she did not know the name or address of the solicitor, with whom he had corresponded ; nor had she the slightest clue to the nature of the information he had given.

Friendless, penniless, and wholly unacquainted with business, she felt that it would be useless for her to attempt a discovery of the mystery, and dismissed the subject accordingly from her thoughts.

She had more success than she had anticipated, in her endeavours to procure a sale for her drawings. Mr. Wrightsen, a picture dealer in the High Street at Oxford, was favourably impressed by some of her sea-pieces, several of which he purchased at a tolerable price, and gave her orders for several more. Teresa and her aunt had been settled about three months at Thorleigh, when the incident of the boating expedition occurred, which first introduced Lawrence to her presence, followed shortly after by his rescue of her little brother, which was the turning point in the lives of both.

Such was the romantic history of Teresa's early life. Was it any wonder that she grew up simple, trustful, full of deep and passionate, though as yet undeveloped, feeling? We have likened the existence of Walton and Jacinta in St. Ebbe's, to that of the dwellers in Prospero's Enchanted Isle. But the resemblance

was far more close in the instance of the father and the daughter. Teresa was the very reproduction of Shakespeare's heroine, differences of time and country being allowed for—as pure, as loving, as ready to believe the first man who sought her favour, to be “a thing divine,” as Miranda herself. Lawrence might almost literally be said to be,

“ The third man that e'er she saw, the first  
That e'er she sighed for.”

But he, the Ferdinand of this tale, was he worthy of her?



## CHAPTER XIV.

MISS WALTON walked homewards from Oxford with a rapid step, but with an air of abstraction, nevertheless, very unusual with her. Mr. Wrightsen, with whom she had parted an hour or so before, had been a good deal surprised, and a little affronted at her demeanour. He had not only paid her nearly double the sum she was ordinarily in the habit of receiving ; but had offered her regular employment at a higher rate of payment. It had chanced that Mr. Hartley, one of the leading booksellers in London, with whom Mr. Wrightsen was connected in business, had expressed great approval of Teresa's landscapes. He had inquired whether Teresa would be inclined to furnish designs for a

fashionable annual, of which he was the publisher. He wanted, he said, a series of drawings executed, illustrative of the various stories and poems which the volume would contain ; and he thought that the author of the sketches before him would be fully equal to the undertaking. Mr. Wrightsen had that morning made the offer to Teresa, who had assented, but without expressing the delighted surprise which Mr. Wrightsen had expected.

The pay was indeed a good deal in advance of what she had received ; and a few weeks ago, the prospect of permanent employment on such terms would have made her quite happy. It would enable her in a short time to lay by money enough to furnish a house in a village a few miles off ; which though small, might be made to bear the appearance of a lady's residence. The rent would be a mere trifle in advance of what they paid now ; and her aunt had promised to make the move as soon as the money had been raised. She would also be enabled to send her little brother to a respectable school ; an object she had much at heart, but had hitherto been afraid to attempt—believing

that while she continued to live in her present home, he would not be admitted at any school, where gentlemen's sons were educated.

But Teresa was not thinking of these things now. The letter she had received from Frank, just before she left home that morning, so entirely occupied her thoughts, that she had no attention to bestow on any one else. It was three days since she had seen or heard anything of him. No doubt it was right for him to take her at her word, as he had done. What else could he do, as a gentleman? His absence had relieved her from a great and ever increasing difficulty. She was free now to follow out the plans she had formed without hindrance. But she was very unhappy, nevertheless. Could it really be that this gentleman, with whom she had been acquainted only a few weeks, whose history was even now almost unknown to her—could it be that he had become so much to her, that all the world was dull and spiritless without him? Why was it, that turn as she might to other subjects, which had hitherto fully engrossed her


thoughts—her music, her painting, her little brother's lessons—she always found herself recurring to him? Was she, in plain language, really in love with this man? Her cheeks burnt like fire in the solitude of her own chamber as she put this question to herself, and was forced to answer it.

Then came a second question, following inevitably on the first—did he care for her? She asked it of her heart a hundred times, receiving every time a different answer. She recalled words, and looks, and little services, which he had shown an increasing eagerness to render; his joyful smile when they met, the warm pressure of his hand when they parted. Were these due only to a kind desire to help her in her friendless state, to the interest he took in her progress, to the pleasure he felt in her society; or were they the tokens of a warmer and deeper feeling—a feeling, she could not but confess, like her own for him. She wearied herself with speculations like these during the first two days; which, in accordance with her resolution formed in Thorleigh Wood, she spent at home. On the third day, she could bear the confine-

ment of the cottage no longer, but went out once more to Thorleigh Wood to retouch some parts of her drawing, as she had persuaded herself it required.

Of course Mr. Lawrence did not come. She never had the least expectation that he would. Nevertheless, she lingered longer in the forest glades than had been her wont, and returned slowly and sadly to the cottage, when the evening was closing in. He had given her up, that was certain. Well, it was her own doing, and it was right, she supposed. But, oh! what would become of her, how could she ever bear it?

She passed a sleepless night, and rose in the morning, remembering with a gleam of satisfaction, that it was the day for paying her monthly visit to Mr. Wrightsen. That would be some relief, however slight, to the monotony which was growing insupportable to her. Immediately after breakfast, she put on her bonnet and shawl, and set out on her walk, encountering, about half a mile on the Oxford Road, the old postman, who was hobbling down from the village with a letter for her. The blood rushed to



her cheeks, as she saw the address. She had never received a letter from Mr. Lawrence, or seen a scrap of his handwriting in her life, but she felt assured, on the instant, that it came from him. It was well that the old man was purblind with age, or he could hardly have failed to discover her secret, hard as she strove to conceal it. She took it from him, and resumed her walk with assumed indifference, but as fast as she was able, until a turn in the road hid him from her sight. Then turning aside into a field, she opened the letter, and devoured its contents.

It was, as the reader knows, a simple request to her to meet Frank on her way back from Oxford that day, as there was something of importance which he wished to communicate to her; but it gave no hint as to what the nature of the communication might be. The idea, which she might have entertained a few days ago, of refusing the meeting, did not now enter her mind; but what did he mean? what had he to say to her? These questions had never ceased for one moment to occupy her thoughts. She had heard Mr. Wrightsen's patronising com-

pliments and congratulations, almost in silence, only rousing herself by an effort to make any answer to them. And now, as turn after turn of the road brought her nearer to the spot of rendezvous, and she at length perceived in the distance his well-known figure awaiting her approach, her agitation became so great that she was hardly able to continue her walk.

Frank had chosen the place for his intended interview cleverly. Just at the edge of the wood there was a secluded path, winding down through the trees to an open glade. This had once formed part of the pleasure grounds of a house, pulled down a few years previously. The lawn and gardens had been suffered to run to waste, and the wood had almost regained its ancient domain. A summer-house containing a rude seat, composed of stumps and moss, seemed the sole surviving relic of the past.

"I hope you will forgive me," began Lawrence, "for breaking your command; but I was so anxious to speak with you, and I did not know how to find any other opportunity. Will you step aside for one moment into the

wood here. I will promise not to detain you."

Miss Walton hesitated. "Could you not say what you want here?" she asked in an agitated voice.

"Not in the high road," pleaded Frank. "We should be interrupted. Someone would be sure to come by."

Teresa still seemed reluctant, but she could not resist her companion's earnest look. With downcast eyes, and cheeks, which in spite of every effort were flushed with crimson, she followed him through the gate and down the narrow path beneath the over-arching trees.

In a few minutes they had reached the little summer-house. Lawrence leaned against the trunk of the tree, and Miss Walton, seating herself on the bench, bent her ear to listen. But there was an embarrassed pause. Lawrence, though he had gained the desired opportunity, did not know how to open the subject uppermost in his thoughts. It was not a simple declaration of love which he had to make; but a proposal (which as he was quite aware) whatever might be Teresa's feeling towards him, it would be difficult to induce



her to accept. Presently the silence was broken by Miss Walton.

"Mr. Lawrence, I ought not to stay here. I am sure you must see that, as plainly as I do. If there is anything which I ought to be told, I must beg you to speak at once. If not"—

She was getting up to go. Lawrence made an effort to detain her. The resolution he had formed of maintaining a diplomatic reserve, had already been forgotten. "Miss Walton, Teresa, do not go away. You must know—you must feel what I would say to you. We have been meeting every day for weeks, for months past. I cannot bear that all should be broken off in this sudden manner."

"I know I ought not to have allowed the meetings," said Teresa, in a tone of constraint. "The fault has been chiefly mine. But as we are to part, it would surely be better—would it not—to part at once."

"How coldly you talk," said Frank with true masculine obtuseness. "But I cannot believe that you really mean it. I cannot have so mistaken you."

Her cheek again reddened. "I do not understand you, Mr. Lawrence," she began as calmly as she could, but her voice trembled in spite of herself.

"You must, you do!" exclaimed Frank, passionately. "You cannot help knowing how dear and precious you are in my eyes. Teresa, you know that I love you. 'Tell me,'" he continued, throwing himself at her feet, and endeavouring to draw away the hands with which she had covered her glowing cheeks, "tell me that my love is not despised—that it is not unrequited."

She made no answer, but bent her head forward until it rested on his shoulder; nor did she withdraw the hand which he had clasped. A long, delicious silence followed, and then the two, now acknowledged lovers, began to talk together with that converse which the world derides as childishness; but which is to the lovers themselves the very language of Paradise. Childishness, I suppose it is; and yet it is strange to see how all real happiness in this world seems to be but a recurrence to the simple guilelessness of the child. See the mother playing with her babe, and, per-

haps, the staid father may join the game. What has become of the graver subjects that occupy his thoughts, his dearly purchased experience of life? or of her cares and anxieties for the present and the future? They are all three playing at ball, or hide and seek, or running races—all three, for the time at least, veritable children. See those two old men, wise and learned, both of them, one at least, highly distinguished among the celebrities of the day. They were old playmates at school, and have snatched an afternoon's holiday from the cares of business and the pursuits of science. Listen to their conversation! What is it about? Is it profound and scientific; replete with the rich experience of two lives passed in the eager quest for wisdom? No, those two old men are talking with animation over their early days at the little grammar-school, where they learned their letters, reminding each other of school nicknames, and boyish mischief, and old playmates. They, too, are children again, and happy in their childishness! Ah, is it not that there is no true happiness except where there is innocence;

and childhood is the nearest approach to innocence which this world can furnish.

It was late in the afternoon when Teresa rose for the second time to take her leave. "Good-bye, Frank," she said, "but this time, not for long. I suppose I may tell my aunt when I get home, may I not?"

Lawrence started in dismay. He had forgotten, as indeed the reader has been already told, all the prudent resolutions which he had formed before the interview—the cautious advances he had meant to make, ascertaining so far as might be possible, the lady's sentiments without revealing his own. Determinations of this kind are, in truth, very apt to be forgotten, when the moment comes for putting them into execution. But the indiscretion had on this occasion proved so delightful, that he could hardly regret it. Now, however, it was necessary to prevent the mischief which might ensue.

"No, no," he exclaimed hastily, "that would never do. We must keep it a secret, a most strict secret. I would not have your aunt know it for the world. Do not look so surprised. I ought to have explained to you

the awkward and delicate position in which I am placed. Sit down again for five minutes, and you shall hear everything."

Miss Walton complied, but her manner was constrained, and her face expressed doubt, if not displeasure. Lawrence saw it and began his explanation with some embarrassment.

"I think I told you, Teresa, that I was an orphan—left an orphan very young. My father was the second son of General Lawrence, and offended him mortally by marrying a lady, who was thought to be—or, rather I should say, whom he chose to consider—beneath my father in rank, as well as, at that time, in worldly circumstances. My grandfather renounced all connection with them; in fact, never saw either of them again after the day of their marriage. He took no notice of me until I was twelve years old, when the death of my eldest uncle, who had no children, left him no other lineal descendant but myself. Then I was sent for, put to school, and allowed to pass my holidays at Derwent Court. But those who know General Lawrence best, say that he never for-

gives, and if I were to offend him by—by such a step as my father took, he would almost certainly cast me off altogether. Therefore”—

“Therefore,” interposed Teresa gravely, “you never ought to have said to me, what you have said to-day.”

“Hear me, Teresa. I did not know that my grandfather would be likely to raise objections, or at least would be so determined on the subject, when we first met. (This was not wholly untrue, for Frank had not given the matter any real thought at that time). I was surely justified in believing that the mere want of fortune would be more than counter-balanced by such merits and attractions as yours. I did not discover the contrary, until my heart was irrevocably given to you. You ought not to blame, but pity me.”

“Still I cannot see,” she replied, with the same constraint, though her heart secretly acknowledged the force of his appeal, “still I cannot see why you have spoken to me, as you have done to-day. You say, and doubtlessly truly,” she continued, proudly, “though I now hear it for the first time,

that General Lawrence would object to your marrying one in my position and circumstances. You say at the same time that you cannot act contrary to his wishes. Why then tell me you care for me? Why ask me to care for you?"

"Ah, Teresa, I cannot help loving you. I cannot forbear from telling you so!"

"That is idle talk. You ask me to be your wife, when you cannot make me so! Indeed, I think you are very cruel."

"Cruel? nay it is you who are so. I cannot make you my wife—True, not *now*—at least not openly, but—"

"Not openly," she repeated. "What do you mean by 'not openly?'"

"Do not look so startled, dearest. You must often have heard of private marriages," said Lawrence, who was now compelled to abandon his outworks entirely, and fall back on his last point of defence, "marriages which are not known for years—and why—why—"

"Why should not I marry *you* privately, is that what you mean?" asked Teresa, with a lofty indignation which became her well.

"I will tell you why I should not. Because I am a lady, the daughter of a high-minded and honourable man, and I would not marry any man, however much I might love him, if he was ashamed or afraid to own me before the world!"

Lawrence looked at her half-abashed, half-admiring. He had never seen her look so beautiful. The dignity of character which her answer expressed, woke for the moment a corresponding chord in his own bosom. He felt as though he would gladly surrender the prospects in life to which he clung so tenaciously, and in lieu of wealth and station, cheerfully accept poverty and want, for the privilege of calling such a woman his wife. But the feeling died away almost as soon as it was felt. He suppressed the words that were rising to his lips, and was silent.

His companion watched him sadly and with something of reproach in her glance. Then for the third time she rose to leave him. "Good-bye. I am sure you will now see that this must come to an end. What has passed to-day must be as though it had never been spoken."



He made no attempt to detain her ; but turned away his face in silence. Perhaps he felt that course would be the wisest policy. If so, he proved to be right. She did not move away, as she had intended ; and, after a moment's hesitation, she spoke again.

" Will you not say ' good bye,' Mr. Lawrence? We must part, but it need not be in anger. Frank, will you not say ' good bye?' "

He turned round. " I cannot say ' good bye' in the sense in which you ask me to say it. I can never give you up."

" If a union with me is to bring ruin on you, as you have plainly implied that it would, you *must* give me up."

" But you are so hasty, Teresa. Can we not wait?" (till my grandfather dies, he felt he ought to say, if he spoke the truth, but he did not, and went on). " A time will surely come. Remember how young we both are."

" *Could* you wait, Frank?" said Teresa, in a tone of half sad and half playful irony. " I am afraid, not very long! You think

otherwise now, I don't doubt. But you would find waiting harder than you have any idea of."

"I would wait months, years, half my life," burst out Frank impetuously. "Anything sooner than lose you. I would entreat you to be my wife now, at once, let my grandfather and the world say what they might, if it were not that I should be consigning you to poverty and suffering. Will you punish me because my love is not so selfish as to be willing to sacrifice you to it. Teresa, you will not be so harsh! You will not break off our intimacy! You will not refuse to be my wife, when these hateful obstacles are removed! You will continue to let me see you as heretofore."

She was sorely embarrassed and distressed. It seemed hard to refuse him everything. He could not help his grandfather's pride and harshness. And were he ever so ready to marry her in defiance of all consequences, she could not let him do it. He saw his advantage, and pressed it.

"My own dearest," he said, "you cannot refuse me this. You have promised to be


mine, and what have I done that you should withdraw your promise? What does love mean, if it does not imply mutual trust? I could trust you always, everywhere, to the uttermost—will you not trust me also?”

She yielded, and took the first false step. It was agreed that Frank and Teresa should continue to meet as they had hitherto done; but a different place of residence must now be found for the latter. She must leave the near neighbourhood of Oxford, or not only would their secret inevitably be discovered, but she would be made the mark for all kinds of falsehood and calumny. After much inquiry, it was settled that Mrs. Nunez and her niece should remove to Morecombe, a small village about fifteen miles from Oxford, near a third class station on the Great Western Railway. Here Miss Walton could pursue her profession; and with the work now promised by Mr. Hartley, would have no difficulty in maintaining her aunt and herself, nor even in sending little Freddy to a respectable school in Reading. The reader will remember that this was, in a great measure, the scheme which Teresa had formed

before she met with Frank; and that she had obtained the consent of her aunt to its execution. The only change was in the place chosen. Frank had fixed on Morecombe, partly because of its convenient situation—far enough to be out of the reach of the inquisitorial eyes of friends, yet not too far to be easily accessible from Oxford; and partly because, in the course of a long rambling ride, he had noticed on the outskirts of the village a cottage to be let, which he thought would exactly suit their purpose.

It stood by itself in a lane which was little frequented, in the middle of a small garden, surrounded by a high laurel hedge. It contained only a few rooms; but these were all high, and of a good size. The name "Clematis Cottage" painted on the outer gate, had a sound of refinement and respectability. Inquiries were made of the landlord, a small tradesman in Wallingford, and references given to Mr. Wrightsen of the High Street, Oxford. No objections were raised, and the cottage was engaged at a weekly rent. All the negotiations were conducted by Mrs. Nunez and Teresa, Lawrence

keeping altogether out of sight. He entreated permission to furnish it throughout at his own expense ; but this Teresa would not allow. He was obliged to limit himself to a few presents of furniture—a piano, a work-table, a sofa, and the like, which arrived from London by rail without any previous warning, and these she was obliged to accept in silence. In less than a fortnight, the move was accomplished, and Mrs. Nunez and her niece had settled in their new home.



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## CHAPTER XV.

"You had nice weather for your expedition to Ulswater, last week," said Eleanor Rivers, to her visitor, Miss Hicks, who, by Mrs. Nevinson's invitation, had come to pass what ladies call—sometimes truly enough, one would think—"a long morning" at the Hermitage.

"Yes, charming weather for once in a way; bright and warm, but without excessive heat."

"That is just the weather for seeing our country. And October is the best time of the year for it too, when it really is fine. Ulswater must have been looking its best last week. By the bye, you have seen all our principal lakes now. Which do you like best?"

"I don't know. Windermere, I suppose. Yes, certainly, Windermere."

"Oh, do you? I was in hopes you would have been of my faction."

"What in extolling Derwentwater, I suppose? Well, it is only natural that you should like it best."

"Yes, I see it every day; and admire it more, no doubt, because I have learned it so thoroughly. They say one must know a thing well, in order to admire it really, you know."

"Do they?" observed Miss Hicks. "*Cela dépend*, I should think. For my part, the things I know best, I generally admire least."

"Really," returned Eleanor, "you are unfortunate. But I was going to say that I believe my chief reason for preferring Derwentwater, is the mountain scenery by which it is surrounded on every side. None of the other lakes can match it in that respect."

"Mountain scenery!" exclaimed Miss Hicks. "Do you call this—" then checking herself, she added, "Well, I daresay I should call it 'mountain scenery' too, if I had never seen the Swiss and Italian lakes. But

the glaciers, and the great pine forests, and the peaks of perpetual snow, spoil one for admiring mere hills of rock and heather like these."

Eleanor flushed a little at this disrespectful mention of her beloved Skiddaw and Saddleback. But the interest she felt in the last part of her companion's speech diverted her displeasure.

"Seen the Swiss and Italian lakes? Have you really? I did not know that. When were you there? Was it long ago?"

"A long while ago, I should call it. I was sent when I was a girl of twelve to Lausanne, to learn French and German; and afterwards to Como, to learn Italian. I was about two years at each place before I was removed to Miss Gurnett's at Holloway. Why I was sent *there*, I don't know—to learn English, I suppose."

"Indeed, and who sent you to all those places, if I may ask? It is what does not happen to many girls."

"I suppose not. I believe my history is rather a strange one. I have no idea at all who sent me to any of the schools."



"But some one must have placed you at them, and some one must have removed you afterwards."

"Oh, Mr. Walsh always gave the directions, and paid the bills. But he never told me for whom he was acting. He is employed as a solicitor by a great many people, and is as silent as the grave about matters of business. I did venture a question or two on the subject once, and got such a quiet setting down, as I have never forgotten."

"And you cannot guess who the person is?"

"Oh, I can guess, if that is all. My idea is that it is some person who was once connected with my father in business. He was a clothier in the West of England, and at one time very rich. Perhaps some one owed him money, or was indebted to him some other way, and has taken this mode of paying the debt."

"How very nice! I should like to think that!"

"Should you?" said Miss Hicks. "Why?"

"I should like to think it was kindness shewn me, for my father's sake."

"Indeed! well, for my part, I should not

be less obliged to anyone who shewed me kindness for my own. Indeed, to say the truth, I don't think there is so much need to be thankful for what isn't done for one's own sake. But after all, very likely that isn't the true explanation. I have no real clue to the mystery at all."

"Well yours is a singular history," said Eleanor, "quite a romance, I should call it. I can't help envying you your residence in Switzerland and Italy. William's letters gave us such interesting descriptions of them : though he cares more for the historical associations, and the manners and customs of the people, than for the scenery, and churches, and pictures, which are what I should delight in."

"William? Mr. Nevinson, that is, I suppose? I heard them talking about him. What is he? soldier, lawyer, or clergyman?"

"None of the three. He has been at Oxford until this summer. He is going to be a clerk first, and a partner afterwards, in Luttrell's and Dennis's bank at Worfield ; and is now making a tour on the continent, before beginning work."

"Ah, so I remember to have heard. Where is he now?"

"At Antwerp. He had just seen the Cathedral and the Picture Galleries, when he wrote."

"Antwerp? I remember we stopped there a night, on our way homeward from the Rhine? I shall remember that Cathedral to the last day of my life."

"Was it so very beautiful?"

"Its chimes were not. They never ceased for ten minutes throughout the twenty-four hours! Our hotel was not more than two hundred yards off, and I had the full benefit of them all night, during which I never once closed my eyes!"

"I should not have minded that for once. William says it is such a grand old city. I can't enter into all he writes about it, because I have not read all the books that he quotes, and I daresay I should not understand them if I did. But I can sympathise with it a good deal; and would not mind lying awake two or three nights, if I could see it!"

"Is Mr. Nevinson clever?" asked Miss Hicks.

"Clever? No, I suppose not—that is, not what is commonly called clever. People, I believe, do not generally think him so."

"Ah, so I guessed from what Mr. Walsh said. But, I forgot, he is your cousin, is he not?"

"Not really. Mrs. Nevinson is not my aunt, though I always call her so. They are not related to me at all. But I have always lived with them, and they are quite the same to me as if they were relations. Still I am sure you need not be afraid of telling me what so kind a friend, as dear old Mr. Walsh, said of him."

"I was not speaking of *old* Mr. Walsh," rejoined the visitor, with some appearance of embarrassment. "But I suppose Mr. Nevinson," she continued, as if wishing to get rid of the awkwardness which her remarks had caused, "I suppose Mr. Nevinson, as he seems to be fond of those old Flemish cities, will explore Bruges, and Liege, and Louvain, and Ghent. And there is the Englishman's Pilgrimage, the Field of Waterloo. It is *de rigueur* for him not to omit that."

"I am afraid he will not be able to see any of them," replied Miss Rivers. "You know he only went for two months, and they will be up next week, and he will be almost

sure to give us a day or two before he joins his uncle. So we are expecting him every day now."

"But I thought Mrs. Nevinson told us that Mr. Dennis did not wish to tie him down to a day or so. Is Mr. Dennis the head partner in the Firm?"

"He is really now the only partner, if that is not a bull. He married Mrs. Luttrell, the widow of the senior partner, and though the Bank is still called 'Luttrell and Dennis,' he conducts the whole business."

"Then depend upon it you will not see Mr. Nevinson home just yet. There is no one to call him to account; and it would be silly of him, I think, to miss such an opportunity as he has, particularly as he seems so much delighted with the Belgian towns."

"You do not know William," replied Eleanor quietly. "I never knew him put off a thing, which he had resolved he ought to do, in my life—at least never for his own pleasure. Nothing short of serious illness would induce him to absent himself from Worfield, on the day named."

"What a dreadful person he must be to live with!"

"You would not say so, if you lived with him."

"Well, perhaps not. Anyhow I am not likely to make the trial. So I must take your word for it."

Miss Rivers made no reply. She felt it better to make none, for she was conscious that her temper, sweet as it was, was much irritated by her companion's remarks. First of all her favourites, Skiddaw and Derwentwater, and now her dearest friend and playmate William—if they were not ridiculed, were at least treated as very commonplace and insignificant. Either Miss Hicks was singularly unobservant of what was likely to hurt other people's feelings, or she took a pleasure in inflicting little waspish stings on their sensitive parts. In either case the effect was not agreeable. She had half a mind to retort; but a moment's thought suppressed the inclination, and the entrance of Mrs. Nevinson at this juncture diverted her thoughts.

"How is General Lawrence?" inquired Mrs. Nevinson after the usual courtesies had been exchanged. "You are staying at Derwent Court, are you not?"

"Yes, for two days. The General wanted Mrs. Walsh to meet a friend, an old school-fellow of hers, who is visiting him just now; and he kindly included me in the invitation. The rest of the family, you know, are from home, so Mr. Walsh is keeping house alone."

"Is Mr. John Walsh away? I knew the Miss Walshes were."

"He has gone on a sporting expedition somewhere—to the Solway, I believe, and is coming back to-day or to-morrow. But I forgot to answer your question about General Lawrence. He says he is as well as usual; but I fancy I can see some difference in him, even during the two months of my stay in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Walsh, who is of course a much better judge, says he is more excitable, as well as more feeble, than he was last year."

"You have not succeeded, I fear, in hearing of an opening that would be likely to suit you?"

"Oh, yes! my oldschool-mistress has found me a situation in a family, which she regards as first rate. I am to go to it next week, and to stay with her for a few days before going."

So I set off for London very soon now, and my visit to you this morning must be a P.P.C. But Mrs. Nevinson is your clock right? if so, I must be going. Luncheon will be ready by the time I reach Derwent Court, and the General's is so terribly punctual a household, that I dare not be five minutes late, especially on my last day."

"Will you not stop and take luncheon here?"

"Thank you, Mrs. Walsh expects me, I know. So good bye." She shook hands and departed.

Meanwhile another interview had been proceeding at a little distance from Mrs. Nevinson's house, of a less agreeable description. Jack Walsh, who was on his way homeward from what seemed a sporting excursion, with gun and knapsack on shoulder, had encountered his humble friend, or dependent, or tool, as the reader may choose to call him, young Verrall. The presence of the latter on the spot where he met Walsh, was no doubt accidental. But Walsh, who had called at Derwent Court, and learned that Miss Hicks had gone to pay a morning visit at Brathay Her-



mitage, probably had his own reasons for loitering about in the path, which lay between the two houses. He was not pleased particularly at encountering Verrall, instead of the person for whom he was waiting.

Verrall, on his side, seemed surprised at the meeting. "You here, Walsh," he said, "I thought you were in Oxford."

"Oxford," repeated Walsh, with a start, "what made you think I had been there?"

"I thought you *were* there," said Verrall. "Has not Term begun yet. I saw in the papers"—

"The Colleges don't meet till next Saturday," said Walsh, recovering himself. "At least St. Jude's doesn't. There's no need to present one's self there, until one is obliged. And the schools won't open for a fortnight or three weeks at soonest. No. I have been northwards—to the Solway, shooting and fishing."

"The Solway! Why, that's where Charles McDermott and Payne have gone. Did you fall in with them?"

"No, I didn't meet anybody I knew," said Walsh. "But what has brought you

here?" he added, as if anxious to turn the conversation.

"I have just taken a note from the office to Mr. Walsh at Derwent Court."

"To my father? Is he with the General?"

"I believe so, and Masters too. But, Walsh, I am glad to have fallen in with you. If I had not thought that you were away—"

"You *believe* so," interrupted Walsh, cutting short either designedly or accidentally, the other's speech, "what reason have you for thinking so?"

"The porter told me that a note had arrived from Derwent Court for Mr. Walsh; which was to be sent on to him at the magistrates' meeting, if he had already gone there. As neither he nor Masters returned when the meeting was over, I concluded they had gone to attend the General. But I want to speak to you on another subject; and you really must wait a moment and hear me. Your business cannot be so urgent, but that you can stop to give me a minute or two."

"Are you sure that the business on which

you have been sent is not too urgent to allow of *your* waiting?"

"My business was simply to take a note to Derwent Court. It has been delivered, and I was not told that there was any answer. So there can be no need for haste. Whereas, what I have to say to you"—

"Concerns yourself and your own affairs, I suppose, and therefore *is* of importance?" broke in Walsh. "Well, if one must hear it, what is it about?"

"It is about that bill, you know—"

"‘That bill,’ and ‘I know,’" again interrupted the other more angrily than before. "I know nothing about it, and I don't mean to know anything. I thought I had heard the last of it, two months and more ago?"

"It was renewed only for three months."

"And why the d— was it not paid outright? I gave you a lot of money. I know that!"

"You gave me just half what I wanted, and what you had induced me to expect—"

"I have nothing to do with your expectations," said Walsh, sharply, whose cue it now was to quarrel with his dupe. "I paid

five-and-twenty pounds for what was, in reality, no information at all, and I think that was quite enough. If the information had been really of value, I should, of course, have paid more for it."

"Well, it's no use arguing that," said Verrall. "But anyhow, you might hear me, and try to help me. Put it in any way you like, it was you who first got me into the infernal mess, which has been troubling me for the last twelvemonth. I think you might try to get me out of it now; and I would advise you to do so; that's more. If I do come to grief, you will be sorry for it, little as you may think it now."

Walsh paused a moment before he replied. He was too wary to be trapped into lending money, by any pretence which Verrall, in his desperation, might invent. But it was possible that he might know something of real importance; and if so, in the present crisis of affairs, it would not do to overlook it. Joseph had shown him General Lawrence's will, that was beyond dispute; and that contained a bequest of five thousand pounds to Miss Hicks, and no more; that was equally

sure. Walsh had trusted no one's eyes but his own in that matter. But it was possible that Verrall might have found a will of a later date, or a codicil, which he had kept back. Jack paid his confederate the compliment of believing him to be quite as unscrupulous a rogue as himself, though, as he added, with a glow of inward satisfaction, not so keen a one. He was also aware, that it would afford honest Joseph the utmost satisfaction to deceive and disappoint him, if it was safe for him to do so. It would be the safest course, at all events, to fence a little, before coming to an open rupture.

"Help you?" he replied, "I think I have helped you tolerably often as it is. But it doesn't encourage a fellow to help you, when you turn round upon him, whenever anything goes wrong with you. What is it you want me to do?"

"I want your help to renew the bill for three months more. Before that time my half year's salary will be due. That will enable me to pay it. In another half-year I shall be in a position to repay all you have lent me."

"And what will you do for me if I consent?" asked Walsh.

"I did not know that you had asked me to do anything," replied Verrall. "But any thing I can do, I will."

"You hinted, just now, that there was something which I should like to know, or which it would be disadvantageous to me not to know, or something of the kind," said Walsh, looking keenly at him. "Will you explain what it was you were referring to?"

"I did not mean that I had any secret which you would be interested to learn. I told you everything I knew about the General's affairs last summer; and if anything since had come to my ears, I should have mentioned it to you. What I meant was, that in the first place, I thought you would be sorry to see an old friend ruined for life, as I shall certainly be if I can't pay this money. Old Wolstone, who holds the bill, threatens to expose me, and sell me up, if I don't pay it to the day. I thought that when this had really come to pass, it would grieve you"—

"You needn't go on any more about

that," interposed Walsh. "I have paid a good bit of money already; more than value received, in my opinion. Sorry or not sorry, I can't pay anymore. But you were going to add something else."

"Yes, I was going to say that if you do suffer me to be ruined, you may be sorry for it in another way. Your father will dismiss me, I have no doubt; and then you will lose the advantage of any services, which my continuing in the office might enable me to render you."

"Very well, Joseph," said Walsh, "now I have heard all you have to say; and I will give you a plain answer. It won't suit my book to lend you this money, and I am not going to do it. But I don't quite believe, nevertheless, in your being ruined. I advise you to apply to your own family. They are the people who would be most hurt by your coming to smash, because, I suppose, they would feel themselves obliged to do something for your support; and it would come cheaper to keep you in your present situation, than help you to get another. Go and tell your brother-in-law, the parson, you told me

about; go and tell him the fix you are in, and I guess he'll fork out the money. As for me, if anything should happen to make me want your help again, I shall be ready to pay for it, as I have done before. But as to stumping up to keep you on your legs, on the vague chance of finding you useful to me at some future time, I am not going to do it. And now I can't stay any longer; if your time is of so little value that you can afford to dawdle about here, mine isn't Good morning."

Verrall made no attempt to detain him. He watched his retreating figure for a few moments, and then turned across the fields in the direction of Keswick. "Mean scoundrel," he muttered, "I will see him hung—and I hope I *shall* live to see that yet—before I tell him anything again, if I ever have the opportunity. Well, I suppose I must take his advice. Hankinson is hard up himself, and bears me no particular goodwill; but Walsh is right, he and my sister couldn't let me go to the dogs—couldn't let me actually die of starvation, without doing something to help me. Hankinson wi'



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it is worth his while to assist me towards keeping my situation at Walsh's. I'll go up and see him and Julia. That will do more than a dozen letters. I have no doubt Philips will give me leave to go, and I must set off at once, for there is no time to lose."

## CHAPTER XVI.

MEANWHILE, John Walsh proceeded with a rapid step in the opposite direction, with the intention of meeting Miss Hicks, before she had reached the end of the narrow lane, in which he had caught a glimpse of her parasol. He was just in time to do this; and turning sharply round the corner of the hedge, came full upon the young lady, who was also walking quicker than usual. Whether she suspected that the meeting was not wholly accidental, cannot be determined; but in any case she showed no suspicion of it.

“Good morning, Mr. Walsh, I thought you were still away on your sporting excursion?”

“I returned last night to Penrith, and

have had a long walk this morning. I hope all is well at home. I have heard nothing for a week, and must ask you to be my newspaper."

"Mr. and Mrs. Walsh are quite well. She is staying for a few days at Derwent Court."

"At Derwent Court—indeed! and are you—you are with her, I conclude."

"Yes, the General was so kind as to include me in the invitation."

"How is Sir James?" asked Walsh, with a glance of more than common interest.

"Mrs. Walsh does not think well of him. She says he is more nervous and excitable, than is usually the case with him. Your father and Mr. Masters were closeted with him for two hours yesterday, and that did him no good."

"Ah, some business worry. Something to do with the game or the tithe, I have no doubt. He frets himself about things of that kind more than he used."

"I don't fancy it was anything of that sort. It was about a letter he got by the Southern mail. I remember noticing it when

I handed it to him at breakfast. I thought for a moment it might have been from Mr. Lawrence. But it wasn't his handwriting, and hadn't the Oxford post mark. The General glanced through it nervously, and then got up and left the room. Soon afterwards Mr. Walsh was sent for."

"And how does my father think him to-day?"

"He says his manner is very strange. He would insist on writing in reply to the letter, and Mr. Walsh could not dissuade him. He had not left his room this morning, when I set out for Mrs. Nevinson's. But his servant said he was still engaged in writing, tearing up letter after letter, as fast as he finished them—a most unusual thing, he said, with him."

"I am afraid you are having but a dull visit there."

"Dull! Oh, no. I have not been used to such very lively company, that I am inclined to be very fastidious on that score, you know."

Walsh lifted his wideawake, and made a low bow. "That is a very high compliment to us, Miss Harriet," he said.

Miss Hicks laughed. "It would serve you right, if I were to apologise for a slip of the tongue," she said. "But you know I was not thinking of you or yours, when I said that."

"I am glad to hear it. It is one of the few occasions on which I should wish you not to be thinking of us. I may hope then, that the visit, which has been so delightful to—to others, has not been otherwise than pleasant to you?"

"Pleasant! oh, yes. I am sure I should be most ungrateful to Mr. and Mrs. Walsh, if I did not think so. Nothing can exceed their kindness. I do not think I am likely to meet with so much of it from other people, that I shall be in danger of forgetting theirs."

"Nay, I can't think you need have any fear on that head. You will be sure to find a cordial welcome wherever you go."

"You judge me favourably, Mr. Walsh," said Harriet, colouring slightly, in spite of herself. "And that is what does not often happen to governesses, I believe."

"Governesses! Surely you will never go out as a governess."

"I am afraid I shall, and that before many days. I have an objection to starvation, and that is, so far as I know, the only alternative. Do you think a governess's life is so very wretched?"

"It is at least one, which I should be most truly sorry for you to be obliged to adopt."

"And what alternative would you suggest for me?"

Walsh appeared to be a little embarrassed at this pointed question. "I know one at all events," he said, in a low tone, "but I fear you would never forgive me, were I to name it. And with your talents and accomplishments," he added rapidly, "I feel sure there must be many. But here we are at the gate. I must not intrude on the General at such a time. You are all to be at home tomorrow at dinner you know, and then I shall hear everything. By-the-bye," he added, turning back, as though the thought had suddenly struck him, "as I am going into Keswick, I could take charge of any letters there may be for the post, and save the General's servant a walk."

Miss Hicks thanked him, and promised to

inquire. Then taking leave of him, she pursued her way through the shrubbery, pondering over his language and demeanour, and vainly seeking for some key whereby to interpret it.

She could not determine whether he was in earnest in the pointed admiration, which he was in the habit of expressing, or only amusing himself with a flirtation, from which he could at any time draw back. She was in general keen-sighted enough; and the present was a question about which—let novel writers say what they will on the subject—women are rarely mistaken. She was on the whole disposed to believe that he really was attracted by her; but if so, why did he not declare himself more plainly? She had never discouraged him at all events, though she had been wary enough not to meet his advances too readily. Surely he must know that the only son of a solicitor in lucrative practice was not a match, which girls who, like her, were absolutely penniless, would be likely to despise. Indeed, Miss Hicks, though not a person of quick feeling, was a good deal moved by his preference for

her, which, she argued, must be inspired by genuine personal regard, and by nothing else. Jack Walsh was good looking too after a fashion, and though certainly not very refined, a pleasant and amusing acquaintance. Independently of the gratitude which she owed to his family for their continued protection and good offices, and to young Walsh himself for the attention he had bestowed on her, it was not at all probable that a better offer would fall in her way. In fact, she was quite prepared to give him as warm a sentiment as she was capable of feeling, as soon as she was satisfied that he was in earnest in his devotion. She resolved also that she would take the earliest available opportunity of bringing the doubtful question to a crisis, aware that the longer the present state of things lasted, the less likely it was to turn out advantageously for her. If she could not bring him to the point before she went to her situation as a governess, there would be little chance of effecting it at all.

As for Walsh, his thoughts were neither so deep nor so intricate. She might find it difficult to read his hand, but he read her's



plainly enough. He was assured that she would accept him if he were to offer to her ; but he had not yet made up his mind whether he meant to do it or not. Her invitation to Derwent Court, was doubtless, so far a point in her favour. It shewed that General Lawrence's interest in her had increased rather than diminished, since her arrival in Cumberland. But the General was notoriously given to change his mind on very slight grounds, and this caprice seemed to grow on him with advancing years. Whatever course Walsh might take, he would at all events do nothing rashly.

Such were his cogitations, as he walked up and down the gravel walk in front of the General's gate, taking care to keep out of sight of the windows of the house. Considering how impatient he evidently was to get home, it was somewhat strange that he should remain there so long, on the mere chance of being able to save General Lawrence's groom the trouble of riding into Keswick with the letter. Nevertheless, he waited for nearly a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time his patience was rewarded. A servant in

livery approached him from the house, with two or three letters in his hand, and a message from Miss Hicks to the effect, that she could not see the General, who had gone to his room, she found, to lie down; but she had ascertained "that those were all there were for the post."

Walsh took them and thrust them, after careful examination, into his coat pocket; after which he set out, as fast as he could walk, for Keswick. He had deposited the letters, all but one, in the post, and was turning homewards, when the noise of a gig behind him, driven at a rapid pace, caused him to turn his head. It was Masters, his father's confidential clerk, who reined in his horse as he saw him.

"Mr. John," he said, "how fortunate! I thought you were still in the North. Someone is wanted to go immediately to Oxford, and fetch Mr. Francis Lawrence."

"Mr. Francis Lawrence;" repeated Walsh. "Is the General worse? Is he thought to be in danger?"

"He was seized half an hour ago with spasms of the heart. Mr. Walsh has sent for

Dr. McDermott. He had not arrived when I set out. But there can be no doubt, I should fear, that the General is in very considerable danger."

"Is there anything that I can do?"

"Well, yes, Mr. John. I think you would be the best person to go for Mr. Lawrence. I was desired to send Verrall—your father did not know of your return."

"My father's orders had better be obeyed," said John. "He seldom likes any departure from them. If he ordered Verrall to go—"

"Yes, Sir, but Verrall has gone off somewhere, not half an hour ago, no one knows exactly where. He will not return for a day or two. Mr. Philips, it seems, has given him leave."

"Rot him," muttered Walsh, under his breath. "Something is always wrong about him. Well then, Masters, why do you not go yourself. It would be particularly inconvenient to me, for I have an engagement myself, which I am most anxious to keep."

"I would go, Sir; without hesitation," said Masters, "but I have Mr. Walsh's orders to go elsewhere to-morrow. And I know your father would prefer your going

to mine. He said it ought to be, if possible, a friend of Mr. Lawrence's. I am just now returning from the Hermitage. We were in hopes that Mr. Nevinson would have reached home this afternoon, in which case I was to ask him to go. But then you see your father did not know of your being in Keswick."

"Are you sure Mr. Nevinson has not come back?" asked Walsh.

"Quite sure. He was never expected, it seems, before to-morrow at earliest."

"Well then, you must go yourself, Masters," said Walsh, who, the reader will not require to be told, was not very anxious to face Lawrence at the present juncture. "You must go yourself. My engagement is one which I really cannot break, if it can any way be prevented."

"I am very sorry, Mr. John. But it is impossible for me to go," said Masters. "I am most positively ordered to accompany Miss Hicks to London to-morrow."

"Miss Hicks, to morrow!" ejaculated Walsh, "what is that for? She was not to have gone till next week."

"Well, Sir, Miss Gurnett had got her a

situation, to which she was to have gone, as you say, next week. But—something has occurred since then. Mr. Walsh perhaps thinks that—that it—it might lay her open to misconstruction, if she remains at Derwent Court now—though really I don't know that either. Perhaps it's best for me to say nothing. But anyhow he has settled that she is to go at once, and I am to go with her."

"Well then, I suppose I must go. Shall I find my father at home?"

"I expect not, Mr. John. All the General's affairs are now settled, but I don't think Mr. Walsh will leave him in his present state, at all events, not until Mr. Francis arrives."

"The General's affairs settled!" exclaimed Walsh, "has he been settling them to-day, do you mean?"

"He made a codicil to his will yesterday. But he was restless and uncomfortable about it. Mr. Walsh thinks very likely that brought on his attack. He tore it up to-day and made an entirely new will."

Jack looked at the speaker as though he wished his eyes could penetrate his bosom, and there read the secret he was so anxious

to learn. But he knew of old that it was hopeless to attempt to extract any information from Masters.

"Well, then, Masters, you may tell my father I will be off by the night mail, though I wish he had sent anyone but me on this errand. Stay," he added, as the other was on the point of driving off. "What am I to tell Lawrence about his grandfather. Is it by his wish that Lawrence is sent for."

"No, I can't say that it is. The General was insensible when Mr. Walsh sent me off. And I don't think he would have sent for Mr. Frank, if he *had* known what was passing. I think you had better say nothing to Mr. Lawrence on that subject at all. But I really must be going, or your father will be uneasy."

"Plague take that slow coach, Nevinson. He always goes slower than anyone else," was Jack's inward reflection, as he mounted the box-seat of the Birmingham mail, an hour and a-half afterwards. "If he had only arrived at the Hermitage, I should have been spared this." He made the best of his present position, however, like a true philosopher. He discoursed stable with the coachman and

guard; smoked, and threw away the stumps of cigars; slumbered and woke up; shivered, drank his brandy and water, and stumped up and down to restore circulation, whenever the coach stopped to change horses—as the much enduring generation of our fathers was wont to do, ere yet the steam horse had begotten his monstrous brood, and ten miles an hour was the utmost speed, which imagination reached. The night wore on heavily enough. At length, as the day was breaking, the coach reached the railway terminus at Birmingham, whence the line to London had been recently opened. Here he was to change conveyances, and proceed by coach to Oxford. The down-mail to Keswick was standing at the door as they drew up; and the first person, on whom Walsh's eye lighted, as he entered the bar of the Terminus hotel, was the very man whose absence he had been so bitterly accusing—William Nevinson.

“Nevinson by all that's lucky! I'll be hanged if I ever was so glad to see a fellow in all my life. I have been looking out for you for the last twelve hours.”

“For me!” exclaimed Nevinson, somewhat

startled by the exceeding fervour of Walsh's greeting. "There is nothing wrong at the Hermitage I hope, is there? My mother, Miss Rivers—they are not ill, are they?"

"No, no, all right, don't be uneasy. But yesterday afternoon, General Lawrence was taken suddenly ill with spasms of the heart. They are afraid he won't recover. My father sent to the Hermitage to ask you to go to Oxford, and fetch Frank down to Derwent Court, without delay. He was particularly anxious that you, above all persons, should be the one to go, as you are so intimate with Frank. Unluckily you had not returned, and I was obliged to go instead. But as I have so fortunately fallen in with you, I hope you will now go on, and execute the commission, as my father originally intended. I entirely agree with him, that no one will be so acceptable to Lawrence on such an occasion as this, as yourself."

Nevinson made a few more inquiries, and then accepted the commission. His luggage was hastily taken down; and in ten minutes more, he was rolling southwards on his mission. Walsh stepped again into the bar of



the Inn, with his carpet bag in his hand, followed by the guard of the down mail.

"Now, Sir, are you going to Keswick in the other gentleman's place? We are off this minute."

"No," said Walsh, "I am too tired to go on now. Let me have a bed-room as quickly as possible. What time does the mail train leave for London to-morrow?"

## CHAPTER XVII.

OUR story reverts to Lawrence, who comes before the reader in a character, of which he has not hitherto exhibited many symptoms in these pages. He is an altered man. He has renounced the morning lounge over his newspaper ; the mid-day siesta over the meerschaum ; nay, the evening stroll under the College elms—shades of defunct Dons, and familiar spirits of absent tutors !—with cigar in mouth, and wideawake on head. His oak is sported from nine o'clock till two, as has heretofore been its wont ; but he is really at work inside, which has *not* been his wont by any means. He has told Mr. Peyton that he means to go in for honours in the ensuing spring, and he seems

really to mean what he says. His hope is that he may succeed in getting a third class—possibly, if the fates are propitious, a second. Should he do so, General Lawrence's satisfaction may be so inordinately great, as to induce him to listen with patience, ultimately with favour, to his marriage with Teresa. It is a forlorn hope, but he is essaying it manfully. He has brushed up his acquaintance with authors, whom he read thoroughly well at Westminster; has deepened his hitherto superficial knowledge of Aristotle and Butler; and has set himself down to the drudgery of the details of Greek and Roman history with the ardour of his character.

Mr. Peyton contemplates him with much inward satisfaction. He is persuaded that the last of several remonstrances, which he addressed to him two months ago, hit the right nail on the head, and has brought about this gratifying change. Mr. Peyton prides himself, as the reader has heard earlier in this story, on knowing how to talk to all kinds of men, fast and slow, dull and clever, aristocrats and snobs. He is given to expatiate at breakfast parties, and occasionally,

though more rarely, in the Common Room, on the want of *savoir faire*—of saying the right thing at the right time—usually displayed by Oxford tutors in their intercourse with undergraduates. He is wholly unconscious that on these occasions, a smile is apt to gather on the lips, and looks of amusement to be interchanged among his hearers. Lawrence's is far from being the only case during the last few years, in which he prides himself on having, by judicious and well-timed advice, worked a surprising reformation. But he is sensible that the present instance is one which will do him more than ordinary credit. If Frank, next May, should really find a place in the second class, and Mr. Peyton now thinks that is not unlikely—it will furnish him with a topic, which will not get threadbare for two or three years to come, at the least.

Dixon, on the other hand, is as sceptical as Mr. Peyton is credulous. He is persuaded that his master is up to some deep dodge; and it sorely troubles him that with all his knowledge of undergraduate nature he cannot fathom the mystery.

“He ain’t the sort of gent, you see, Joe,” he remarked to his friend the under-porter, as they smoked a sociable pipe together one day, just before the return of the young men after the Long Vacation. “He ain’t the sort of gent, you see, as takes naterally to his books in his third year. I knows the looks of one of ’em, as is beginning to bear up for a parson. That comes on gradiwal—that do. And there’s other symptoms as shews themselves at the same time. First, there’s the picters—the young women a spinning about on one toe, and the race ’osses and the steeple-chasings, and the fight betwixt the Nobby One and the Herefordshire Chicken—they’s turned out of the sittng room first. Sometimes they puts them into a cupboard, sometimes they gives ’em to another gent, sometimes they gives ’em to me. I had a picter of Madam Duvernay, a catchoo-cher as they calls it, as I sold four times over; until a Scotch gent swopped it away out of College at last, for a Henglish ’Omer. Then they gives up going to supper parties, and takes to mornin’ chapel reglar, and dines in hall, and breakfasts with the tooter, and talks

diwinity. And then the pins and the studs—they wanishes. Guess I knows where *they* goes to. But it comes on gradiwal, it do. Besides, they're mostly sons of parsons, or of reduced hofficers, and that sort. Now, this here gent, *he* aint going to be a parson—not he; and there's his picters and his other things just the same as ever they was. I see the groom, as come up with that ere black mare of his last autumn, and he told me as he hadn't no call to demean hisself to books, and had lots of money coming to him. And as for his staying up this Long Vacation, bless you, *he* didn't want to study; and he didn't study neither, that's more for a good two months of it. What has he taken to it for now, in this here way—that's what I want to know? I thought, pr'aps, as 'twas the governor was coming up, permiscus, as they say; and Mr. Lawrence had heard of the dodge, and was a going to pay him off in his own coin. But that wouldn't go on for all these weeks, mind you. T'aint in human natur to last that time! It's mysterious, Joe, it's mysterious, and I only hope there aint no harm in it."

“ Well, but p'raps the governor *is* coming up after all,” suggested Joe, “ T'aint impossible. I've knowed things stranger nor that. I'll tell you what happened to me once, Tummas. It were five-and-thirty, or forty, years ago. I 'was a lad of nineteen or so, and had just been made one of the junior bed-makers. I mentions that because I was uncommon green in those days, or I shouldn't have made such a mess of it.

“ One of my first masters was a gent of the name of Gothard. ‘Go-it-hard,’ they used to call him in college, and he deserved the name, for it would puzzle a chap to go ahead much harder than he did. Well, his third year had began, and he hadn't yet got through his Little Go, and I fancy the tooters had given his father a hint of how matters stood with him ; or, p'raps, some of the tradesmen who found a long figure to his name in their books, began to get uneasy on the subject, and wrote to ask a question or two. Anyhow, the Governor got wind—in a measure that is—of the state of Mr. Gothard's affairs. And one day my master calls me into the room, and sports the oak.”

“ ‘ Stephens, says he ; ‘ I’m in a difficulty.’

“ ‘ The tailor, Sir ?’ says I.

“ ‘ The tailor be hanged,’ says he, ‘ and the wine merchant, too. They’ll be paid when I comes into my fortune, and they don’t expect it before. I don’t call them difficulties,’ says he.

“ ‘ Well, Sir,’ says I, ‘ I admires your pheelosophy—’ you see, I knew as he owed them two only twice as much as his father allowed him in a whole year, and there was lots of others besides, and some of ’em was always on the look out for him—‘ well, Sir, I admires your pheelosophy ; and would you be good enough to say, what you *do* call a difficulty ?’

“ ‘ I’ll tell you, Stephens,’ says he ; ‘ my father has heard tales of me, and I know from a sure hand as he means to pop down one of these here days, and take me unbeknownst as it were.’

“ ‘ Begging your pardon, Sir,’ says I, ‘ but that don’t seem to me to be no difficulty at all. He comes down, finds the oak shut ; gets entrance after hammering fit to bring the door down, and find you with a wet towel



round your head, a reading Alkali (meaning possibly Algebra). That is a plain business, that is.'

" 'Ah, so it would be, Stephens,' he answers, 'if I knew when he was coming. But 'spose he comes at a wrong time and finds me—'

" 'Well, to be sure,' says I, 'if he was to catch you with a breakfast party in your rooms, and the champagne growing rather fast; or playing cards at twelve o'clock in the day; or with one of them supper parties about eleven or so at night, it would be rather orkidd, I *am* afeared it would; that I must allow.'

" 'Hold your clack,' says he. 'He won't come at any of them times. He'll come by the coach as leaves town at six o'clock in the morning, and gets here about two. There aint no other conveyance, as he can come by, for he can't afford to post, and the other coach comes in too late for him to get back that day. Now, Stephens, you must hang about the inn-yard, when that coach comes in for the next few days; and if you sees him, take him down to my rooms, and come and let me

know. I shall be in Mr. Harkaway's rooms,' says he, 'for my oak must be open of course; and then I dursn't stay in my own rooms, as you know.'

" 'I am agreeable, Sir,' says I, 'but pray what sort of looking gent is your father. Excuse me, but it isn't all gents that are gents, who have fathers that are gents too. I should like to make sure of him.'

" 'Why, Stephens,' replies he, 't'aint easy to describe a man. But he's about my height and dresses rather stylishly; generally wears top boots and leathers, and has a gold watch with large seals at his fob. He's generally thought very handsome. It's not likely you would mistake him.'

" Well, Tummas, I undertook the job, and I was reg'lar at the coach office for a matter of three weeks and more, 'cepting Sundays; but he never turned up. I told Mr. Gothard as I guessed he'd thought better on it, but Mr. Gothard said no, he was sure he meant to come. Well, one day, when the coach drives up, I see a gentleman get down as agreed exactly with the description. A good-looking chap he was about forty-five years

old, in a blue coat, brass buttons, cords and tops, watch and seal, all as Mr. Gothard had said. He had no luggage, but a small black leather case, which he carried in his hand. I watched him, and heard him ask the porter the way to St. Jude's College. All right, thinks I, and follered him, till he got to the gate; then I steps up.

“ ‘Do you want any gentleman in College, Sir?’ says I. ‘Can you tell me where Mr. Gothard lives?’ says he. ‘Mr. Gothard, Sir,’ says I; ‘oh yes, Sir. Every one knows Mr. Gothard. No gentleman’s better known, or more respected, Sir. I am his servant, Sir. This way, if you please. I shows him up into my master’s rooms, which was all in apple pie order, as I always put ’em before going to the office.’

“ ‘Will you be pleased to take a chair,’ I says, ‘Mr. Gothard is gone to a lecture at his private tooter’s, and won’t be back for twenty minutes more, or so. Would you take a glass of wine. Mr. Gothard has got some, as is oncommon good, which his father give him; but he never drinks it hisself, only keeps it for his friends.’

“‘Thank you,’ the gentleman says, with a grin, ‘I’ve no objection,’ so I brings out the wine.

“‘Mr. Gothard is a studious gentleman is he?’ he asks, after a glass or two of master’s prime port. ‘I had heard rayther a different account of him. I heard as he was fonder of horses and dogs and billiard balls, than of books.’

“‘Tain’t true,’ says I indignant-like, ‘there ain’t a gent as works harder nor he does. We only wishes as he would take more care on his health, and p’raps, if you are a friend of his, you’ll try and persuade him. I’ll just go with a message to his tooter’s, and say he’s wanted. What name shall I give, Sir?’

“‘Oh, he knows me well enough,’ he replies, with a wink. “You needn’t go to tell him no name.’

“Just as I gets to the bottom of the staircase, I sees Mr. Gothard come out from Mr. Harkaway’s door, which was just opposite, and shake hands very friendly with another gent whom I remembered seeing at the coach office a few minutes before. He was taller and more distangey, as they say, and looked

younger than my gent. Indeed I should taken him for Mr. Gothard's brother, but I heard arterwards as that was all a take in. But otherwise he wasn't very unlike the other and their dress was as like as two peas. My mind misgive me, as soon as I saw him. I goes up to Mr. Gothard and says 'Your father's come, Sir.' 'I know that,' he answers, 'I can see that for myself.' 'Is that him?' whispers I. 'To be sure it is,' says he, 'don't stop me, Stephens. My oak is open isn't it.' 'Yes,' says I, 'it is, worse luck! and there's a gent inside too, a waiting for you, as I mistook for your father.' 'A gent,' he exclaims, turning as white as his shirt, 'what is he like?' 'He's dressed like your father,' says I, 'but he's got a round red spot over his right eye, which your father has not got; and he's lost one finger of the left hand.' 'By, something, I needn't repeat,' says he, 'I'm done for. It's Naleham,' says he, 'the Sheriff's officer. He don't know me, but I knows him well enough.' He looks for a moment quite wild, and then runs after his father, who had gone on before—to catch him if he could, and prevent his entering the

room. I cuts after him, and we went up the stairs as hard as we could pelt. But we was too late. I heard the door shut as we ran up the last flight; and when we reached the landing, we could hear the conversation inside. 'Have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr. James Gothard?' says my gent, as civil as sawdust. 'The same at your service,' replied the other. 'That is all right then,' says my gent, 'you are my prisoner at the suit of Gripes and Mordecai for four hundred and twenty-seven pounds. Will it be convenient to settle, or will you go back with me to London.'"

"Well that *was* a go," remarked Dixon, "that goes beyond anything I've ever heard, that do, what did the young gent—your master—what did he do?"

"Bolted like a shot, as he heard the last words. I never see him in Oxford again. But I was told as he didn't turn up for six months, until his governor put an advertisement into the paper, saying as all was forgiven; and then they made it up straight, and he went to Horsetraly."

"And what come of the old gent?" asked Dixon.

"The old gent? why the officer wouldn't let him go no how. He wouldn't believe me, as he had got the wrong sow by the ear. We was obliged to go before the Principal, before he'd be satisfied about it. So you see, Tumm-as, that you may wait a long time for a gent's father, and yet he may turn up all the same at last."

"Well I don't dispute your 'sperience of life, Joe" said Dixon, as the under-porter took the post-bag which had just arrived, and began to examine its contents. "And look here," he continued taking up one of the letters, "look here, this does seem as though you *was* right. Here's a letter for Mr. Lawrence, and in the Governor's hand-writing too, I'll make my testament. He had just such another, two months or so ago—just afore he began a studying."

"That's it," rejoined Stephens, "I'll go bail that's an old gent's hand-writing, and a cross un's too, or I'm much mistaken. Post-mark Keswick, I see. Is that where the Governor lives, Tom?"

“Yes, to be sure, ‘Keswick, Cumberland.’ The groom told me so hisself. I’ll come back and ease your mind, if I finds anythink out, Joe.”

With this considerate assurance Mr. Dixon took his leave; and entering the room in which our hero was sitting, engaged on the knotty question raised by Aristotle, as to whether a man can injure himself—a question, by the way, which few undergraduates find much difficulty in determining practically in the affirmative—laid the letter on the table. Lawrence changed colour as he took it up. He tore the envelope open, and ran his eye rapidly through the contents. Then noticing his servant’s presence in the room, he peremptorily desired him to leave it. As Dixon descended the stairs, he heard the oak flung violently to, and could distinguish the sound of his master’s feet, as he traversed the room with disordered steps. Returning to his gossip, he reported that matters seemed to be very bad indeed with his master; and he was half afeared as the supplies was cut off—a calamity which was, in his opinion, the heaviest that can befall a man.



The letter was in truth one which might well cause its receiver vexation and alarm. It was dated the same day, on which General Lawrence had received the letter by the Southern Mail, as reported by Miss Hicks. It will be remembered that the afternoon of that day had been passed in a manner which boded no good to Frank. Mr. Walsh had been sent for, and had drawn up a codicil, attested by himself and Masters; for the General never allowed any of his household to know anything of his testamentary affairs. The codicil was to be retained or destroyed, according as the events of the next day or two might determine. Its contents were not specified in the letter to Frank, but its purport might be clearly enough discovered.

“Frank, Frank,” wrote the old man, “you have deceived me—not only disobeyed—but deceived me. Your father did the first, but never the second. I could have forgiven him, if he had asked my forgiveness; and I have thought of late years, that I was too harsh with him, and ought to have remembered that his spirit was as high as my own. For his sake I will now pardon in you what

nothing else would induce me to pardon. But, mark you, only on condition that you abandon at once, and for ever, the *mésalliance*; which, in spite of your assurance to the contrary, I have the most direct and positive proof of your having resolved on. Give me this promise, and I will tear the codicil I have made to-day. Refuse, and I tell you plainly you shall never inherit Derwent Court, or any of my money, except a sum enough to keep you from want. Notwithstanding the deceit you have practised on me, I shall be content to take your promise; but you must send it me, and that without delay, or it may be too late."

Lawrence crumpled up the letter and threw it from him. "How on earth can he have discovered this!" he exclaimed. "Resolved on a marriage! who told him I was? I am confident I have never given any one the slightest hint of it. Yet he says he has positive assurance of it. Yes," he continued, picking up the letter, and again reading it through. "'Direct and positive assurance' are his words. Who can it be? No one but Teresa and myself know it. Teresa, it can-

not possibly be Teresa? No, no, of course not—what can I possibly be thinking of. And, by the bye, there is Mrs. Nunez, could she have written? No, certainly not. She hardly knows my name—nothing, anyhow, of my family, or of my circumstances. I doubt whether she can write at all.”

He leaned back in his chair, and his brain began to busy itself with all manner of conjectures. Was there any one in Morecombe who knew anything on the subject? Yes, now it occurred to him there was. Not very long after Teresa’s settlement in the village, he had one day casually encountered William Nevinson’s friend, Pascoe. He could not be mistaken in the man, whose personal appearance was very remarkable. What could he be doing there? Luckily Pascoe had not seen him; and he was able to make inquiries without the other’s knowledge. He found that he was a visitor at the Parsonage, studying with the Rev. Mr. Todd, who had come to take the Vicar of Morecombe’s duty during the summer months. Lawrence now remembered Nevinson having told him that Pascoe’s tutor was going to settle in this

manner, in one of the Oxfordshire villages, during the Long Vacation. It was a most unlucky chance that he should have pitched upon Morecombe, as the place for Teresa's residence. But he was somewhat re-assured by learning that Pascoe visited no one in the village, and rarely went beyond the bounds of the Parsonage garden. He had, in fact, never again encountered his fellow collegian ; and he learnt from Teresa that neither he nor Mr. Todd ever visited any of the parishioners, unless sent for. Frank had almost forgotten all about the two gentlemen in question ; but now it occurred to him that it was far from improbable that General Lawrence's correspondent was Pascoe. Very probably, indeed, some village gossip had reached Mr. Todd's ears, and through him his pupil's. Pascoe was just the person to run away with the idea, that he intended to deceive Teresa, and that it was his duty to expose and defeat his unworthy designs. He was perfectly unscrupulous, and moreover bore Frank no good will.

But after all, what did it signify who told the General. It was enough that he knew it,

and had demanded that his grandson should renounce his intended marriage, or forfeit his inheritance. The old man had rightly said that Frank would not stoop to a falsehood. The issue then he had been so long dreading, was now thrust peremptorily upon his notice. He knew only too surely that any attempt to change, or even to mitigate the General's determination, would be vain. If he had been quite candid in the first instance, it might have been possible, though very difficult, to bring him over to his views. Now Frank might as well try his hand on the College tower out there.

As he pondered thus, it suddenly struck him, that his grandfather had said something about not leaving him to want, even if he should disobey. He took up the letter again. "I tell you plainly, you shall never inherit Derwent Court, or any of my money, except just enough to keep you from want." How much might Sir James think would be enough to keep him from actual want? One, two, three hundred a year? No, surely not less than his present allowance of four hundred a year. If that were secured to him, he might

marry Teresa without imprudence ; and he felt he would willingly surrender all the rest of his grandfather's possessions for her. But then his debts. Reckoning on being General Lawrence's heir, he had run the full round of folly and extravagance. Clothes, jewellery, wine, dinners, vingt-et-un, bets, backing bills, contributed to make up a total, which he feared two thousand pounds would not do much more than cover. If it should transpire that he was not the General's heir, immediate exposure must follow. Sir James might—probably would, pay his debts ; but he would charge the sum advanced for that purpose, on whatever income he might allow him ; and he would be obliged to live on one, or at most, two hundred a year. No, there was really nothing, but the bitter alternative—ruin and want on the one hand ; the loss of Teresa on the other.

It was a terrible struggle in the young man's breast. The instincts of a life of self-indulgence pleaded forcibly on the one side ; the strength of a passionate attachment on the other. Wearied and worn out with the mental conflict, the natural longing for

Teresa's presence and sympathy became too powerful to be resisted. He must see her again. He must tell her all, and why not at once? Further delay would but protract his wretchedness, and be no boon to her.

He looked at his watch. It was already half-past four o'clock; too late to catch the afternoon train. He must ride, and if he set off at once, he might be at Morecombe by tea-time. He took his hat and hurried off to the stables.

The twilight was deepening fast as he approached the little village of Morecombe; and the church clock struck seven, as he entered the lane in which Mrs. Nunez's cottage stood. It had been a bright warm October day, and the early approach of night was the only sign that summer had long since passed away. The woods still wore their rich green livery. Scarcely a leaf had fallen. The swallows skimmed their flight in undiminished numbers, not having yet received their notice to quit, from the earliest messengers of winter. Lawrence dismounted, and tied up his horse in the shed where it had stood for many an hour during the last two months, while its

master sat in the summer-house by Teresa's side, or sauntered with her through the green lanes. It was later by an hour or two than any visit he had previously paid. But he put a bold front on the matter, tapped at the front door; and without waiting for an answer, entered the little parlour, which was the only sitting room of the cottage.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.







